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University — Université

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Degree for which thesis was presented — Grade pour lequel cette thèse fut présentée

Master of Education in Counselling Psychology

Year this degree conferred — Année d'obtention de ce grade	Name of Supervisor — Nom du directeur de thèse
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THE RELEVANCE OF ATTRIBUTION THEORY IN DOMESTIC VIOLENCE

by

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A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE

OF MASTER OF EDUCATION

IN

COUNSELLING PSYCHOLOGY

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY

EDMONTON, ALBERTA

FALL, 1983

THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

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DATED 20 May 1983

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this exploratory study was to examine the relevance of attribution of aggression to domestic violence. Attribution "is the process of interpreting the cause of another's behaviour" (Frieze, 1976). Domestic violence refers to the perceived intention or act of physically hurting a family member, specifically a spouse (Straus, Gelles and Steinmetz, 1981).

Attribution of aggressive intent in a violent relationship was explored in the study through interviews with three couples with a history of domestic violence. Individual and joint interviews were held. The focus of the interviews was on rules in the relationship and violations of certain rules leading to attribution of aggression.

The data obtained were described in a case study format which facilitated presentation of the interpersonal relationship information.

Results of the study were described in light of Hotaling's (1980) ideas on attributions and rule violations. Attribution of aggression was not found to be relevant to domestic violence in the population studied. The findings were discussed and new hypotheses suggested. This exploratory study indicated the need for further study using more sophisticated research designs to examine the problem of attribution in domestic violence.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

A special thank you is expressed to Dr. Bill Hague, my supervisor, for his guidance, support and faith in my work.

My thanks are extended to Dr. John Paterson for his direction and encouragement on this project.

Thank you to Dr. Claus Hallschmid, who provided the stimulus for this thesis, as well as his assistance and ideas.

My gratitude is expressed to Dr. Philip Mills for participating on this committee and for his longstanding support of my academic pursuits.

Very special thanks go to my husband, Jim, for his infinite patience, support and caring. Special thanks also go to Melissa for her all round help and her laughter.

Finally, many thanks to the couples who gave their time and shared their experiences so willingly.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

In the last ten years domestic violence has exploded on the scene of helping professionals. While violence between husbands and wives has always existed, the reported incidence of battering has increased dramatically in recent years. Incidence is thought to be as high as one in every four to six couples (Gelles, 1978; Roy, 1982; Straus, 1980). Over 11% of men and 12% of women report domestic batterings yearly; over 15% of these injuries are considered severe (MacEachern, 1980; Roy, 1982, Straus , 1980).

The response to this increase in reported violence at home has been the establishment of shelters for battered wives across Canada, the U.S. and the U.K. (Davidson, 1978; Landsberg, 1982; Pizzey, 1974), commencement of victims' groups, batterers' groups, and a deluge of professional and popular literature aimed at raising awareness and exploring the problem (D'Oyley, 1978; Gelles, 1979; Martin, 1977; McNulty, 1980; Walker, 1979).

In view of the increasing pressure for professionals to deal with domestic violence, often with the risk of severe injury to one or both clients, new information about the cause and management of this phenomenon is needed.

Background and Significance of the Study

Psychologists, psychiatrists, social workers, sociologists, criminologists and others began to study domestic violence from many different perspectives over the past decade. The results were not yet conclusive with regard to causation, required intervention or

implications for the future of domestic violence. There were, however, many areas of consensus among the experts in this new field. These areas included recognition of increasing (reported) incidence of domestic violence and the contribution of social factors to the presence of aggression. As up to 90% of the victims of severe violence were women and the majority of perpetrators were men, it was recognized that both women and men involved in battering relationships needed help (MacEachern, 1980; Roy, 1977, 1982). While there has been agreement among some recent writers about certain aspects of domestic violence, there was insufficient information about specific causation of the problem within a relationship.

In 1980 Hotaling examined domestic violence using aspects of the attribution models of Heider (1958), Jones and Davis (1978), and Kelley (1967, 1971). Kelley (1973) defined attribution theory as one that tells how people make causal explanations, about how they answer "why" questions. It dealt with the information people use to make inferences and with how this information was used to answer questions. Part of this process involved attribution of intention (Shaver, 1975).

Hotaling (1980) suggested that within the organization of husband-wife relationships there may have been features that facilitated the attribution of malevolent intent and hence, escalated the violence. He examined relational rules between a husband and wife as a way of understanding the internal structure of the relationship. Relational rules in this context were generally undefined, implicit and ambiguous. Violation of these was therefore perceived most clearly by the "other" in the system. In addition, Hotaling posited that violations of certain rules may have enhanced the occurrence of the violence (1980).

The identification and isolation of these rules and rule violations

in battering couples was attempted in this study. The results had significance for the application of attribution theory to domestic violence in both clinical practice and subsequent research.

Purpose

The purpose of this exploratory study was to examine the relevance of attribution of aggressive intent within a husband-wife relationship where there is a history of domestic violence. Rules and rule violations in the relationship were identified and described in relation to attributions.

To obtain information about attributions in violent relationships, three couples who were receiving treatment at Forensic Assessment and Community Services (F.A.C.S.), an outpatient service of Alberta Hospital, Edmonton located in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada (see Appendix C) were selected for the study. The research was conducted with the cooperation of this agency. Each couple had a history of domestic violence. An interview focusing on conflict situations and relational rules was conducted with each spouse. Each couple was interviewed together in a semistructured format. All interviews were recorded on cassette tape.

The results were described in a case study method to allow an in-depth focus on the interpersonal dynamics of the couple and to enhance the exposure of rules, violations and attributions.

In addition to exploring the relevance of attribution to domestic violence, a secondary purpose of this study was to expand and enrich hypotheses put forth by Hotaling (1980) on this subject and generate new hypotheses, facilitating the construction of more elaborate studies in the area.

Definition of Terms

Attribution theory refers to the study of perceived causation of behaviour (Hatcher and Schultz, 1979; Kelley & Michela, 1980). It is "concerned with how people interpret information about their own behaviour and the behaviour of others when making judgements about the underlying cause of events" (Frieze, 1976).

Domestic violence is defined by Straus, Gelles and Steinmetz (1981) as "an act carried out with the intention, or perceived intention, of physically hurting another person" in the family. For the purpose of this study, domestic violence refers to violent acts between husbands and wives.

Delimitations of the Study

The study was exploratory to identify areas for further research as the research to date in the area of attribution in domestic violence has been minimal.

The cases studied all had an established history of domestic violence and were receiving treatment for violent behaviour at Forensic Assessment and Community Services, Edmonton, Alberta.

A case study design was used to describe the data obtained through the interviews. This method was well suited to the in-depth and complex nature of the study.

Limitations of the Study

The size of the population studied was limited by the availability of couples in joint treatment for severe domestic violence. The couples chosen for study were among a minority of the battering population who receive formal treatment services. Hence this was a select client group.

It was recognized that the couples' conscious recollections of situations may not conform to their actual behaviour at the time.

The reactivity of the couples to an observer was acknowledged as a limitation of the data collection method.

Overview of the Study

In Chapter One the background and significance, purpose, delimitations and limitations of the study are outlined.

Relevant literature on domestic violence, attribution theory and its application are reviewed in Chapter Two.

The methods used in this exploratory study are described in Chapter Three. The design of the study and rationale are presented in the chapter.

In Chapter Four descriptions of the cases and the data obtained in the interviews are presented.

Results and conclusions drawn from the data regarding attributions and other findings are described in Chapter Five.

Finally, in Chapter Six, the relevance of the findings to Hotaling's hypotheses (1980) about attribution of aggression is discussed. New hypotheses generated from the findings and implications for subsequent studies and research were presented.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELEVANT LITERATURE

Domestic Violence

Until the early 1970's domestic violence was treated with "selective inattention" in the literature (Gelles, 1980). Once domestic violence was "discovered" by social psychology researchers, attempts were made to arrive at a common understanding of the problem.

Early definitions focused on the terms "battered women" and "wife beating", as the most visible victims were women. A battered woman was defined by Walker (1979) as a woman who "is repeatedly subjected to any forceful physical or psychological behaviour by a man in order to coerce her to do something he wants her to do without any concern for her rights ... furthermore, in order to be classified as a battered woman, the couple must go through the battering cycle at least twice" (p. xv). A definition prevalent in the 1970's described a battered woman as one who simply admits publicly that she was battered (Dobash and Dobash, 1979; Gelles, 1980; Walker, 1979).

Studies of violence in the home by Gelles and Straus (1979) and Straus, Gelles and Steinmetz (1981) used the operational definition of violence as an act carried out with the intention, or perceived intention of physically hurting another person. A wifebeating and husband-beating scale was developed by Straus (1978) as part of the Conflict Tactics Scale used to measure how families deal with conflict among themselves. The following scale is used to measure violence and frequency of violent acts.

Wife Beating and Husband Beating Scale

K. throwing things at spouse

L. pushing, shoving or grabbing

M. slapping

N. kicking, biting or hitting with the fist

O. hit or tried to hit with something

P. beat up

Q. threatened with a knife or gun

S. used a knife or gun (Straus, 1980)

Items N through R were designated as the Spousebeating Index (Straus and Brown 1978) because they are all acts which are high risks for serious injury to the victim. In addition to facilitating specific reporting of violent acts, the Spousebeating Index explicates the definition of violence by Straus et al (1981).

Incidence. In a major study conducted in 1976 in the U.S.A. on 2,143 couples by Straus et al (1981), 3.8% of the respondents reported one or more physical attacks in the previous year. The overall rate for violence by husbands was 12.1%, and 11.6% by wives, with wives engaging in violence somewhat more often than husbands. The specific violent acts engaged in by wives most often were throwing things and kicking and hitting with objects. The frequency of violent acts requiring superior physical strength was twice as great by men (Straus, 1980). Although women battered almost as frequently as men, women were most often injured seriously. Women were most certainly the victims in domestic violence (Davidson, 1978; Gelles, 1979; Walker, 1979).

In 1979 Gelles reported that 16% of American couples had used at least one form of violence in the previous year. Nearly 30% of all couples reported at least one violent incident during their marriage. Prior to 1976 in the U.K. and U.S.A. estimates of incidence of domestic violence were based upon police reports of calls about domestic violence, wife or husband beating and court reports of violent cases. These methods of gathering data were generally considered inaccurate and inadequate according to Freeman (1979), Martin (1977) and Moore (1979). However indirect, these attempts at gathering incidence data did pave the way for subsequent, more accurate studies.

An example of a more accurate study is the 1980 Hamilton, Ontario study of domestic violence reported to local police. The findings were that 92.2% of the complainants to police were women. Women constituted 8% of the offenders. Physical violence was reported 64% of the time; 5% involved the use of weapons. Of the reported violence 84.5% resulted in minor injury, 15.2% resulted in serious injury and one incident was fatal (MacEachern, Adler & Roland, 1980).

Straus (1980) maintained that the figures on domestic violence are representative of American couples generally. He regards them, however, as drastic underestimates of the incidence of domestic violence due to underreporting and omission of interviews with divorced and separated spouses about previous violent relationships. Straus suggested that the true incidence for marital violence is closer to 50% or 60% of all couples than to the 28% who actually reported it.

In 1977 Steinmetz reported the results of a random sample of families as follows. Over 60% of all families participating in the study experienced violence during their marriage. Two hundred and

seventy incidents of domestic violence were reported in the study for the previous twelve month period. Police records for this same period and this same population showed only one report of domestic violence, bearing out the idea of underreporting.

Theories of Causation

It was impossible to cite any single cause of domestic violence, as current theories ranged from specific physical and neurological disorders to environmental influences.

Intraindividual Causes. The following theories explained violence in terms of some quality of the individual.

Biochemical imbalances such as those found in diabetes, hypoglycemia, cerebral allergic reactions, elevated levels of neurotoxins and malnutrition have all been associated with violent outbursts (Roy, 1982).

Substance abuse has been cited throughout the literature as being associated with domestic violence. Although a variety of drugs have been studied in conjunction with violence, the primary substance of concern was alcohol (Coleman, Weinman and Hsi, 1980; Freeman, 1979; Monroe, 1978; Roy, 1982). Monroe (1978) pointed to alcohol as "playing a prominent role in the production of violent outbursts" (p. 35), while Gelles (1974) believed alcohol became a means of "deviance disavowal" for the aggressor. The person used alcohol as an excuse for violent behaviour or "time out" from societal rules. In either case, a strong association between alcohol and violence is implied.

Certain neurological and neurobiological conditions have been associated with violence. These included temporal lobe epilepsy, disorders of the limbic system and the neocortex and damage to the brain as a result of injury or lack of oxygen, among others (Monroe, 1978);

Roy, 1982). Episodic dyscontrol syndrome has been described by Elliot (1978) and Monroe (1978) as a cause of wife and child battery, owing to the occurrence of explosive rage as a part of the brain dysfunction of the syndrome.

Violence was associated with some primary psychiatric disorders. A common condition producing violence is a paranoid state (Freedman, Kaplan and Sadock, 1978; Roy, 1982). Outbursts of violence could also occur in schizophrenia, manic-depressive psychosis and personality disorders, according to Elliot (1978).

Social Theories of Causation. In a review of theories of interpersonal violence, Gelles and Straus (1979) pointed to several sociocultural and social psychological theories relevant to domestic violence.

Using the model of social learning, violence was viewed as a product of a successful learning situation which provided the individual with knowledge of the response (violence) and what stimuli were to trigger the response (when violence was appropriate). The family served as a training ground for violence (Gelles and Straus, 1979) providing role models and examples for imitation. Turner, Fenn and Cole in 1981 suggested that direct positive and negative reinforcement for aggression could instigate aggressive behaviours. Thus, if aggression was modelled at home, it could be reinforced by parents or peers.

According to Gelles and Straus (1979), frustration-aggression theory suggested that aggression resulted when a purposeful activity was blocked. Farrington (1978) restricted the use of this theory to the expression of aggression as a response to the emotion felt by the

individual when a goal was blocked. This tendency to aggression was viewed as a product of social learning.

Another social psychological theory of causation was attribution theory. Attribution referred to the process of inferring or perceiving the dispositional properties or tendencies of persons or things. Attribution theory describes the process by which the individual attained the perceptions of the dispositions (Kelley and Thibaut, 1969). This theory was seen by Gelles and Straus (1979) to be important in family violence because it provided understanding of the part the family played in learning violent roles and self images.

Hotaling (1980) specified a particular combination of family rules and structural characteristics which produced a high probability that a family member would attribute malevolent intent to the acts of another family member. The imputation or attribution of intent to do harm was more significant than the actual intent, according to Tedeschi et al (1974).

In 1980 Pearce and Cronen used levels of meaning in communication to study rules in relationships. They posited that there are structural deficiencies in interpersonal rule systems that make communication between intimates inherently problematic. Rules of 2 (or more) people likely won't mesh, preventing coordination between them even though coordination may be the verbalized and logical goal of the couple. Harris (1980) described paradoxical logic in couples' communications. In violent couples she found that the aggressor was perceived as powerless, with no alternatives but violence. As well, tension in relationships was found to be reduced by conflict (and violence). This created renewal of commitment to the relationship and a perpetration of the

tension -- conflict -- commitment cycle.

The theory of cognitive dissonance as described by Festinger (1957) has been used to explain aggression and attitudes toward victims of aggression in situations like domestic violence (Glass and Wood, 1969). Cognitive dissonance has been defined as two (or more) knowledges, beliefs, opinions or feelings held about one's self which are dissonant, or inconsistent with each other. This produces a psychologically uncomfortable situation, motivating the person to reduce the dissonance by changing his attitudes or behaviours or beliefs. The person also would actively avoid situations which increase the dissonance again (Shaw and Costanzo, 1970). The intimacy of the marital relationship juxtaposed to physical violence and abuse between partners seems to offer limitless possibilities for inconsistency or dissonance in both spouses.

The culture-of-violence theory proposed that violence was distributed unevenly in the social structure with higher incidence in the lower socioeconomic strata. The differential distribution of violence was a result of differential social values and norms. This theory viewed culture as a dynamic entity, with violence a reflection of the operation of the culture as a system (Gelles and Straus, 1979). As well, people in lower socioeconomic groups generally suffered greater frustrations and a frequent response to this was violence (Steinmetz and Straus, 1974).

Sexual inequality was considered a major causal factor in the incidence of domestic violence (Martin, 1978; Moore, 1979; Straus, 1980) along with sex role socialization (Davidson, 1978 and Martin, 1978). The male dominated power structure of the family and society permitted and sometimes encouraged husband-to-wife violence, according to Straus

(1980). As part of their sex role socialization, boy children learned to physically dominate others and girl children learned to be submissive. This pattern has continued itself despite the efforts of the Women's Movement in the 1970's.

Causes Within the Relationship. A number of causal theories have been reviewed in relation to domestic violence. By definition domestic violence must occur in a relationship. Certain special qualities of relationships that may have caused or contributed to domestic violence are discussed here.

Gelles and Straus (1979) suggested the following:

1. Within a family or relationship, the amount of time spent together interacting increased the risk of violence.

2. The "primary group" nature of a family or relationship necessitated a wide range of interactions between family members. This increased the number of potential events for conflict. In addition, the nature of the involvement of family members or spouses was high intensity, increasing conflict potential.

3. There was a implicit right in a marriage or a family to influence behaviour of another member, increasing the risk for conflict. These qualities would have seemed to promote violence and dispel the stereotype of the family as a haven from outside pressures.

The sexist organization of the family or relationship with male dominant and female submissive stereotypes had a high potential for conflict, especially when the structure was threatened, according to Brown (1980). Dominant males were easily threatened and submissive females get frustrated by being on the bottom. Egalitarian relationships as popularized in the 1970's provided increased intimacy as a result of shared aspects of life. This has resulted, paradoxically,

in increased marital conflict and risk for violence (Brown, 1980), as a result of the intense intimacy.

Imbalance of status in the relationship was cited among Hornung, McCullough and Sugimoto (1981) as a causal factor in domestic violence. The lower status person in the relationship may have threatened the higher status person who had a vested interest in maintaining the imbalance of power. This situation could lead to conflict, it could also see-saw, perpetuating the risk for conflict.

Environmental Factors as a Cause. Many environmental factors influencing the cause of domestic violence manifested themselves in individual and internal ways. This manifestation was acknowledged; however, for the purposes of this discussion the external causal factors have been addressed.

Toxic levels of lead, copper or zinc acquired at the worksite have been shown to cause interspousal violence. New violent behaviours observed in the affected men disappeared when the level of these toxins returned to normal (Roy, 1982). One could only speculate on the effects of hazardous wastes, nuclear by-products and other contemporary environmental pollutants on the occurrence of violence.

The breakdown of social stability was thought to create extreme environmental stress. Shifting social values and unrest not only fostered violence but condoned it according to Roy (1982). Gelles (1979) maintained child abuse and spouse abuse were a result of increased social stress and pressure. Stress in families due to outside influences such as unemployment, financial difficulties and changing expectations could also lead to violent behaviour (Farrington, 1978). Indeed, as these pressures mounted, the incidence of reported violence has increased

steadily (Roy, 1982).

Treatment as an Alternative to Domestic Violence

Domestic violence is still a relatively new treatment problem. A great deal of effort has been spent on helping and treating various aspects of the total problem, with minimal success. Some of the fragmented treatment approaches have been discussed followed by more holistic methods.

The first component of the domestic violence problem to come to the attention of authorities was the wife, or victim. Police, physicians and other helpers have always been aware of battered women (Freeman, 1979). However it was only with increasing consciousness and the support of the Women's Movement that women began to speak up and seek help in the early 1970's (Pizzey, 1974; Roy, 1982). At first, for help women victims relied heavily on feminist support. Helpers eventually began to get cooperation of social agencies and consistent reporting systems were developed. Treatment still consisted mainly of traditional psychiatry and peer support (MacEachern et al, 1980; Miller, 1974; Pizzey, 1974; Roy, 1977). Shelters emerged for battered women who had no safe place to go to escape their husbands. Attendant to these facilities in some areas were counselling services, victims groups, assertiveness training, legal advice and "networking" (Pizzey, 1974). The new system was now ostensibly taking care of the victims. But what about the men, the perpetrators of the violence?

Men in violent relationships came to treatment through two main avenues. Either a man was required to participate in treatment as a result of legal charges for violence or he came voluntarily, having

acknowledged violent behaviour as a problem, usually with prompting from his spouse or an outside agency. These men were usually offered traditional psychiatric treatment or behaviour therapy or group therapy with other violent men (Watts and Cortois, 1981). Although Monroe (1978), Roy (1982), and Stuart (1981) advocated a thorough psychological, neurological and physical assessment with specific treatment recommendations based on the results for batterers, the most common kind of help noted in the literature was group therapy (Adams and McCormick, 1982; Coleman, 1980; Courtois and Watts, 1981). This contradiction seemed to underscore the lack of understanding of the problem.

The third main mode of treatment available for both batterers and victims was family or marital therapy. This was the treatment of choice, according to Geller (1982). Her model was based on a systems theory perspective and the violent behaviour was considered the sole responsibility of the violent partner. This responsibility was stressed to deflect blaming between spouses and to stengthen the focus on the relationship. Coleman (1980) used a blend of family, marital and individual therapy following a thorough assessment of violence potential and the couple's strengths. Groups for marital couples were being tried in some settings (Dutton, 1983; Hallschmid, in press).

Future Trends in the Management of Domestic Violence

Although the problem of domestic violence has just begun to receive adequate attention, suggestions for the future have been made

by Straus et al (1981). They devised a spouse abuse prediction checklist to be used by helpers assessing couples. (See Appendix B)

Self help information and instructions for setting up shelters for battered wives abound (Davidson, 1979; Martin, 1979; Roy, 1982). Associations for battering men have been growing in the U.S.A. and U.K., providing peer support for a "violence anonymous" type of network (Heppner, 1981; Garnett and Moss, 1982; Martin, 1978).

A growing trend was noted among professionals treating domestic violence to assess and treat the wife individually, and then assess and treat the husband individually. When both were deemed "ready", joint counselling was commenced (Dutton, 1983). This approach was expensive and time consuming and results were inconclusive.

Attribution Theory and Process

Definitions. Attribution, according to Webster's Dictionary (1963) means to explain by way of cause or to regard as a characteristic of a person or thing.

Attribution theory refers to the study of perceived causation of behaviour (Kelley and Michela, 1980; Hatcher and Schultz, 1979). According to Frieze (1976) attribution theory is "concerned with how people interpret information about their own behaviour and the behaviour of others when making judgements about the underlying cause of events" (p. 95). People make causal attributions about every event in their lives; these judgements are believed to be central to a person's understanding of his environment.

The process of attribution is the organization of a continuous stream of information from another's behaviour into meaningful units or tendencies of persons or things and how these perceptions are made (Kelley and Thibaut, 1969).

Functions of Attribution. Heider (1958) emphasized the role attributions play in social cognition or thought processes. Attributions are a way of informational processing, of using recollections of past events to interpret current data.

Forsyth in 1980 suggested that attributions serve explanatory and predictive functions for behaviour. Perceiving a cause helps a person understand why something occured and may also give an indication about whether the same or similar behaviour will occur again.

Attributions protects self and social identities by attribution of causes of one's own behaviour to external or situational sources when the behaviour may be seen as embarrassing, inappropriate or wrong. This "face saving" feature of attributions could be exemplified by a student who attributed his poor test performance to "bad luck" or construction of the test rather than his own poor preparation or by an athlete who credited his great skill in a good performance rather than favourable conditions of the field (Forsyth, 1980).

Relevant Applications of Attribution Theory. Attribution theory was first described and applied by Heider (1958) who advocated the use of "common sense psychology" in the development of hunches and concepts. He believed the common man had the knowledge to describe and understand human behaviour, in part through attribution process.

Heider's original work focused on interpersonal perceptions and relations. He used attributions to order and classify perceptions of people and the environment. Information was interpreted and the general features of the causal network were internalized and mastered in some way, forming the content of the cognitive matrix underlying interpretations of behaviour and attempts to influence it. Almost without exception, subsequent attribution theorists have referred to Heider's originative work.

Attribution theory has not been systematically applied to family relationships or to domestic violence according to Doherty (1981). However, attribution studies in areas related to domestic violence have laid the groundwork for the study of attribution in domestic conflict and violence.

Some studies related to attribution in domestic violence are listed and/or reviewed briefly:

(a) Jones and Davis (1978) extended and particularized Heider's work on person perception. They dealt with personal involvement as it affects attributions.

(b) In 1981 Thompson and Kelley reported on egocentric bias in judgements of responsibility for activities in close realtionships. Their findings indicated biases in both self-attributions and attributions in others, increasing with the closeness of the relationship.

(c) Power attribution was the subject of Kaplowitz's (1978) epigenetic study. The attribution of power to others was found to

exist but was less than the person's real potential power.

(d) Attribution of responsibility to a victim of rape by graduate students was found to be greater to low status, "provocative" victims than to higher status victims, according to a study by Kanekar, Kolsawalla and D'Souza (1981).

(e) In 1978 Patten and Wood reported on a study of victim's aggression and attributions regarding the source of verbal aggression. Their findings indicated the severity of actual aggression correlated positively with the attribution of aggression by the victim. Counter-aggression by victims with high attributions of aggression was greater.

(f) Social contexts and attributions of criminal responsibility were studied by Myers (1980). She found that in severe crimes such as physical and sexual assault, observers' attributions of responsibility depended more on the character and history of the victim and the perpetrator and less on the external circumstances.

(g) Two studies have looked at attribution in relation to conflict in marriage. Madden and Janoff-Bulman (1981) focused on blame and marital satisfaction. They found that spouses who attributed more blame for conflict to themselves had greater marital satisfaction. The converse was also true: spouses attributing greater blame for conflict to the other reported less satisfaction in the marriage. The study by Doherty identified four possible assignments of blame from the model of Orvis, Kelley and Butler (1976). These were self-blame, blame to the other family members, and blame to the relationship or the external environment. Doherty inferred that intimates constantly influenced each other's attributions.

As well, a great deal of marital conflict was purported to be expressly concerned with disagreements over attributions about each other's behavious, especially attributions of intentions and motives.

Application of Attribution Theory to Domestic Violence

In 1980 Hotaling examined attribution theory in the context of domestic violence. He asked the question, "are there organizational features peculiar to the husband-wife relationship that facilitate the attribution of malevolent intent?" (P. 139). He suggested that relational rules are part of all relationships and that violation of certain of these rules enhanced the likelihood of attribution of aggressive intent and hence the chance of violence.

Relational Rules. To address the question of features of the marital relationship facilitating attribution of malevolent intent, Hotaling (1980) looked at rules within the husband-wife relationship. In this relationship rules are of broad, substantive scope. They were applicable in and out of one another's presence and across situations, as the family attempted to control a wide range of behaviour.

Denzin (1970) described the following relationship rules: (a) Rules of deference and demeanor, governing the members' behaviour in public or in private, (b) Rules providing mechanisms for regulating secrecy, knowledge and personal problems of the relationship, (c) Task rules specifying who does what and with whom, (d) Rules specifying conduct when not in the presence of the other (p. 131).

Hotaling (1980) suggested that relational rules were agreements between intimates that "protect and enhance situated identities and

at the same time control or restrict behaviour (p. 140). The necessity for such rules grew out of the intimate knowledge of secrets, desires and personal problems each had of the other and which was not available to the public at large. These rules served to protect and control at the same time.

Rule Violations. Rules between intimates were often undefined, ambiguous and implicit. They were subject to constant change in order to meet situational demands. This inherent lack of clarity increased the likelihood of unintentional rule violations. Intentional violations may have been facilitated as well, as blame was difficult to ascribe in ambiguous environment.

According to Denzin (1970) rule violations failed to uphold the moral order of the relationship. Rule violations caused intimates to be irritated, embarrassed, and threatened both personally and as a participant in the relationship. The perceived intent of the rule violation could influence the consequences for the violation. Most rule violations, however, were not seen as aggressive and are denied or dismissed. If this were not the case, families would be in conflict most of the time.

Rule violations attributed as intentionally aggressive were an important step in the occurrence of interpersonal violence (Tedeschi et al, 1974). Malevolent intent attributed to the rule violated by the other spouse increased the probability of violence toward the attributor. Hotaling summarized: "the perception of the opponent's intent (to be aggressive) is a more important variable in the instigation of aggression than actual physical attack. If a given act is seen as aggressive, it dramatically escalates the probability of

counteraggression" (1980, p. 141).

Characteristics of Rules and Rule Violations that Enhance the Attribution of Aggression. Hotaling (1980) suggested four characteristics of rule violations that seemed to lead to the violence being viewed as aggressive.

The first kind of rule violation was one that controlled or restricted behaviour. Any action forcing the other person into a position of limited alternatives increased the attribution of aggressive intent (Tedeschi et al, 1974). The family was an intimate and emotionally closed unit. This decreased the likelihood of organized or institutionalized consequences for a rule violation. That is, a third party was not likely to be called in to mediate a dispute. Under these circumstances, the other spouse had no recourse and was under the control of the rule violator.

The second rule violation postulated to increase attribution of aggression was a rule violation which threatened situated identities. Hepburn (1973) stated that perception of threat to a situated identity was the first stage in the process which may have terminated in interpersonal violence. This was not a verbal threat, rather an action which may have endangered the other's perceived identity. The meaning attributed to the action of the spouse was derived from both the act and the alternative acts not performed in the situation. Intimates held vast amounts of biographical information about their spouses. Attributions of intent were based upon this information store as well as the situation at hand.

The third rule violation was one that disrupted claims of the other spouse. Claiming behaviour referred to making claims or demands on

another because of one's social position relative to the other. That is, a rule violation of this sort challenged the authority of the spouse in some area. Hepburn (1973) suggested that introduction of asymmetrical claims into an initially defined egalitarian (symmetrical) relationship, or symmetrical claims into an initially defined authoritarian relationship would disrupt the harmony of the interactions and threaten the identities of the participants in the relationship. According to Tedeschi et al (1974) in intimate relationships, participants may have been predisposed to view disruptions of claims as attempts by the other spouse to further his or her own self interest.

The fourth and final rule violation thought to enhance attribution of aggression was the violation of a highly connected rule. Rules in relationships were not distinct from each other. They were undefined, vague and closely related to other rules. Contrasted to rules in the military which are logical, clearly specified, highly differentiated and with a predesignated consequence, relational rules were closely affiliated, undifferentiated and had no prespecified consequence.

Hotaling proposed that the more intimate the relationship, the more undefined and vague the rules. The greater the ambiguity and vagueness of rules in a relationship, the greater the connectedness of the rules. The intimates shared a web of expectations, suppositions and restrictions regarding the other and the relationship. These were not verbalized or explicated. Because most of the rules were related, the probability of violating a rule connected to another or others is great. In the situation of a vague and highly connected rules, there was little recourse of method to even acknowledge a rule violation. Scott and Lyman (1970) posited that

the greater the ambiguity of intention of a rule violation, the greater the importance of the attribution of meaning to the rule violation.

In addition to the imputation of aggression as a likely result of these four relational rules, the nature of violence itself was an important factor in the attribution of malevolent intent. Violence was an intense, pain-producing act. If past attempts by a spouse to resolve rule violations have escalated to violence, the probability of the victim of the violence seeing the other spouse as aggressive was increased. As outcomes of actions became more severe, the perceiver had an increasing need to attribute responsibility to the other (Walster, 1966).

Sequelae

Despite the preceding evidence, rule violations leading to attribution of aggression may have been less likely to occur in the context of the family due to the very nature of the family unit. Jones and Davis (1978) suggested that one's personal involvement in the family or with a spouse affected one's attributions to that spouse or family member. In a husband-wife relationship, any action by one spouse which was observed by the other had direct positive or negative consequences for the observer/perceiver. This gave the act hedonic relevance, or importance to the being of the observer/perceiver. The observed or perceived act had an effect on the perceiver's values and purposes. Under these circumstances, when the perceived act had importance to the perceiver, the perceiver may take a position totally contrary to the perceptions of all others. This was explained,

according to Jones and Davis (1978), by the personal involvement with the person committing the act and the hedonic relevance of the act for the perceiver. A classic example was the battered wife who denied obvious injury and continued to return home to her husband despite others' protests.

There may have been perceiver bias in attributions made as a result of rule violations. This was because of the relationship of the rule violator to the perceiver. When the perceiver believed the observed rule violation had been conditioned or influenced by his or her presence, the personalism of the situation affected the attribution (Kelley, 1971).

Finally, Hotaling (1980) described the lack of third party observers in relational disputes. As well, intimates rarely have the opportunity to observe other intimates in conflict. This lack of objectivity inherent in a relationship probably influenced spouses to make causal attributions as a result of rule violations to the environment or external situation rather than the rule violator.

Summary

Domestic violence has been defined and described as a perceived or intentional act carried out to physically hurt another person, in this case the spouse. A number of causal theories were discussed ranging from individual to environmental biases. Some methods of treating the problem were reviewed.

The nature of attribution was exposed through definition and example. Applications of this social psychological theory were presented briefly. The main focus of this chapter was on the application of attribution theory to domestic violence using Hotaling's framework. Relational rules and violations in relation to attribution processes were discussed.

CHAPTER THREE

METHOD

Background

The study was designed to explore the effect of certain rule violations on the attribution of aggression in a husband-wife relationship where there is a history of domestic violence. A case study design was used and the data were presented descriptively.

Design of the Study

A case study design was selected for this project. This design afforded in-depth analysis of social situations (Black and Champion, 1976) and also provided an effective model for obtaining answers to questions about interrelationships and personal perceptions (Fox, 1970). The generalizability of case study material has been criticized by Black and Champion (1976) and by Sommer and Sommer (1980). However, this potential weakness was thought to be compensated by the greater depth of the study (Sommer and Sommer, 1980).

Within the framework of the case study design a descriptive method was used to present the data. Descriptive methods are used to provide vast amounts of information about people under diverse or unusual social situations (Black and Champion, 1976). The results of a descriptive study also enable the investigator (or others) to construct more sophisticated and elaborate experimental designs based upon the data in the study (Black and Champion, 1976; Sommer and Sommer, 1980).

Population

Three couples who currently attend treatment at Forensic Assessment and Community Services were selected for the study. These subjects were

chosen because (a) they have an established history of domestic violence; (b) they have awareness of problems they have experienced with conflict in their own relationships; and (c) they have demonstrated desire to make changes to reduce or eliminate the problem with violence, as evidenced by continued compliance with treatment. Characteristics of these subjects are summarized in Table 1.

The size of the population chosen was small. This was influenced by the limited number of couples currently in treatment at Forensic Assessment and Community Services for domestic violence and the in-depth nature of the study design.

Methods of Data Collection

Data collection methods were chosen to enable the gathering of a large amount of relevant data from a small and specific population. The methods included a questionnaire focusing on conflict situations and responses; this was administered in an interview setting. As well a semi-structured interview was conducted with each couple to gather perceptions of the other spouse and conflict situations. The interviews were taped on cassette tape.

The questionnaire was administered by interview to each individual spouse. It was constructed to access the person's perceptions, responses and intentions in a potentially realistic situation with his or her spouse. Data about the attribution process and relational rules were obtained. The questionnaire was administered in an interview setting to ensure clarity and facilitate disclosure of sensitive material. (See Appendix A)

Four types of relational rule violations thought to increase attribution in a husband-wife relationship were the basis of the

Table I

Characteristics of Sample Population

		Couple A	Couple B	Couple C
Age	W	34	24	42
	H	26	23	40
Length of marriage		2 years	2 years	2 years
No. of children		1	1	1
No. of children from previous marriage	W	2	0	3
	H	0	0	0
No. of children living with couple from previous marriage	W	0	0	1
	H	0	0	0
Education	W	Grade 12	Grade 12	Grade 11
	H	Grade 9	Grade 12	2 yrs Univ.
Occupation	W	homemaker	homemaker	homemaker
	H	unemployed (laborer)	foreman	unemployed (drafter)
Violence prior to marriage towards spouse	W	no	no	no
	H	no	no	no
Violence prior to marriage toward other than spouse	W	no	no	no
	H	yes	yes	yes
Criminal charges resulting from violence in the marriage	W	no	no	no
	H	no	no	no
Criminal charges resulting from violence outside the marriage	W	no	no	no
	H	yes	yes	no

W = Wife

H = Husband

questionnaire. The four kinds of relational rule violations hypothesized by Hotaling (1980) to enhance attribution of aggression are as follows.

1. Rule violations that restrict or control behaviour.
2. Rule violations which threaten situated identities,
3. Rule violations disrupting existing claims.
4. Violations of highly connected rules.

(Hotaling, 1980)

Each of four sections of the questionnaire contained a brief description of hypothetical spousal interactions that correspond to a rule violation. The description was read to each subject and discussed briefly to provide clarity. The subject was then asked to reconstruct two situations with his or her spouse that involved interactions similar to the hypothetical situation described. One of these situations was to result in conflict or violence with the spouse, and one was to lead to harmony or good feelings, if possible. The decision to include both conflict and harmonious situations was made to provide contrast between interactions in the different situations and to produce additional data about attribution processes.

A series of questions about perceptions and responses in each of the two reconstructed situations was asked of each spouse by the interviewer. The responses were recorded by the interviewer on cassette tape. This process was repeated for all four rule violation areas.

The second means of collecting data was a semi-structured interview conducted with each couple. A semi-structured format was selected to facilitate the gathering of specific data and to give couples the opportunity to discuss their perceptions, feelings and issues in their

own style. Through this format and by the use of both open and closed questions, the amount of data gathered was maximized.

The questions asked in the joint interview included inquiries about perceptions of the other's actions and responses in an actual conflict situation. A description of a recent conflict was elicited. Each couple was asked to describe their relationship at present and their expectations for the relationship. Comments and questions about the process were addressed at this time. This interview was also recorded on cassette tape and transcribed by the writer.

Description of Data

A profile of each couple was presented. This was based on information gathered in the interviews; changes were made to ensure anonymity. The interviews with each spouse and the couple were described.

The results of the data were described as they related to relational rules and rule violations. The reactions of spouses to conflict situations and spouses' identification of violent behaviour were reported. Attributions of aggression and attributions in general identified in the data were presented in the results.

Research Questions

The primary aim of this study was to determine the relationship of certain relational rule violations to the attribution of aggression in a married couple with a history of domestic violence.

The specific questions addressed were:

1. What evidence is there to indicate a relationship between specific rule violations in a husband-wife relationship and the

attribution of aggression?

2. Specifically, what relational rules can be identified?

3. What rule violations as described by subjects lead to conflict and/or violence?

4. In this process how does each spouse react to the other?

5. What behaviours of each spouse can be identified by the other spouse as leading to violence?

6. What is the relationship between the attribution of aggression and the occurence of violence?

CHAPTER FOUR

DESCRIPTION OF INTERVIEWS

The data obtained in the interviews with the three couples were transcribed from the tape recordings. The interviews have been edited to condense material and arranged in the order of the interview questions. Most quotations have been left in their original form; some coarse language, poor grammar and non sequiturs were left in the data as they communicated the essence of the interviews.

Each couple was described separately, the interview with the wife was documented, then the interview with the husband, followed by the couple interview. The most outstanding feature of the interviews was the openness and spontaneity with which the subjects spoke. Much of the data was gathered with little or no prompting. Hence, the structure of each interview varied slightly. Questions were not asked if the answers had been given spontaneously.

All subjects were cooperative both in arranging and participating in the interviews. One subject presented some difficulties in setting a time to meet and missed appointments but was pleasant and open when the interviews took place.

Couple A

Basic Data

Couple A had been married two years. They had one child, age two. The wife was 34 years old, had a grade twelve education, and was a homemaker. She had one previous marriage and two children from this marriage who were not living with her. The husband was a 26 year old unemployed laborer with a grade nine education. This was his first marriage.

Interview with Wife A

QUESTION

Mrs. A. was asked to describe a situation in which one spouse's actions influenced the other. (See Appendix for format)

SITUATION

Mrs. A stated that her husband didn't always take jobs that he could, requiring her to go to work. This was something she did not want to do, as she wanted to stay home with her child.

RESPONSE

She had always expected that her husband would work and be the breadwinner. Her upbringing taught her that the husband worked and the wife raised kids. She assumed he would take responsibility.

Her response to the overall situation was to get out and get a job. In the situation, however, she remained "silent but churning inside". She recalled warnings from her family against being with Mr. A. She stated, "I don't think I've stayed with him just to prove them wrong".

She said that her actions have no effect on her husband, as he had started and stopped lots of jobs in a brief period. He knew her reaction but would do it anyway (quit jobs). When this occurred she stated she became cold and abrupt with him. She has "thrown in his face many times that you asked me to have your kid, to marry you and you don't take care of me".

When she said this he got angry, threw things and kicked things. She said he could be trying to get at her because he often has said, "I've quit drugs and booze. What more do you want from me?" She speculated that he may have been thinking, "I've done this much for her, I'm not going to sweat for her, too".

When asked why he might have felt this way she said if she hadn't insisted he quit booze and drugs she might have left him. "I feel responsible for him because I've done so much insisting. He's lived up to my expectations all along ... to cast him aside ... it's possible he'd go back to where he was".

He placed expectations on her: she had to be skinny even though she is at normal weight; she had to keep the house spotless. If she failed to meet these expectations, Mr. A. became angry and smashed and threw things. She said his temper was so violent she tried hard to meet his demands. "I keep hoping this will stop. If these groups (at F.A.C.S.) can help, I want him to continue".

She said she would have liked to change the way she answered him. He told her she sounded "like a lawyer" and she wanted to change this. She would "like to get under him so he can get above her instead of (her) acting like his parent; I don't think he likes that. His mother is overbearing and domineering and he says 'shut up, you sound like my mother'. This gets him very angry." She said she believed he was ready to make decisions now and she must learn to be quiet.

QUESTION

Mrs. A. was asked to recall situations in which one or the other's role was influenced by the other.

SITUATION

She said, "he is the organizer in the family and it bothers me. He organizes everything from the kitchen to my lingerie."

RESPONSE

In the situation where he had organized her sewing or her clothes,

she responded to him with a sarcastic remark but believed he would have liked her to say, "Oh, you did a nice job". She believed he needed reassurance. He even asked her for comments, and she believed she was supposed to comment favorably.

Although this bothered her she said she wouldn't push it, because he would break something or hurt her to get even. She could tell he was going to be violent because he started swearing, his voice changed, he flexed his arms and his body "filled up with I don't know what". When he was a kid she said he had hit a punching bag. Now he punched the fridge.

QUESTION

Mrs. A. was asked to describe a situation in which one person's authority in the marriage was changed by the other.

SITUATION

Mrs. A. said that they each had equal authority, but over different things. She said she had authority over raising the baby, but Mr. A. interfered. He tried to control what the baby ate. If he got mad at the child, he threatened to bash in his head or kick him.

RESPONSE

She tried to ignore this or handle it quietly. As soon as she raised her voice, Mr. A. got angry. She believed he controlled the baby's food because he didn't want a fat child and he thought he should be very strict. Mrs. A. said she would leave if Mr. A. ever struck the baby. "When he hits me, it's one thing; when he hits the child, that's another."

A second major situation involving differences over authority was

the house. Mr. A. "wants to overpower the whole house, right down to my underwear",she said, although Mrs. A. viewed herself as the homemaker. She said, in response, "I try to be nice, because he gets so angry if I criticize where he has put something." He organized things, according to Mrs. A., to know exactly where everything was at any given moment. There was nothing she could do to change this.

QUESTION

Mrs. A. was asked if in arguments with Mr. A. they began arguing about one area and other, unrelated issues were brought in.

SITUATION/RESPONSE

She said they argued over trivial things at first and then they began to bring in larger issues. This question elicited no further response from her.

QUESTION

Mrs. A. was asked to think of a situation in which good feelings resulted.

SITUATION

She said, "Almost every situation can end that way if you approached it right, for example, I can get him up in the morning slow and easy and he's happy or fast and hard and he's angry."

RESPONSE

She believed if she could learn to handle situations right, Mr. A. would lose his temper only rarely. She thought she had a lot of influence over his temper but not 100%. When Mr. A. got angry Mrs. A. could change his reaction by turning "light" -- not sarcastic. If she dropped a subject, he dropped it; he was easily distracted.

General Information

Mrs. A. was very supportive of Mr. A. attending F.A.C.S. "He is not as angry all the time." She said he had kicked her a couple of times in the past weeks but blamed herself for not keeping her mouth shut. She said he kicked or pushed her to "hurt her back" when she was critical. When asked what she thought he would do if she really lashed out at him verbally, she said "he'd tear me apart. He has smashed the furniture many times, cut things with a butcher knife; he'd do it to me, too."

She said if he hadn't changed after going to all the groups for a couple of years and he was still violent she would leave. He had threatened to kill her if she left and also to hurt her family. She said this gave her strength to stay. Also, she was sure he would go back to drugs and booze if she left. She said she believed Mr. A. will grow and change and she wanted to "see it through", but wouldn't tolerate abuse to her child.

Mrs. A. reported no violent impulses in herself until this relationship. She had now felt such rage she could do things she'd never normally do, but knew Mr. A. would stop her and destroy her, and so she did not act on these impulses.

She believed she was in control of the situation and must help Mr. A. get over his temper because she was committed to the marriage. She said if she were to give up on Mr. A. it would be like giving up on herself.

Interview With Husband A

QUESTION

Mr. A. was asked to describe a situation in which one spouse's

actions influenced the other.

SITUATION

During an argument in which Mrs. A. had threatened to leave, Mr. A. took her car keys and "told her to walk".

RESPONSE

"This doesn't start the argument; the argument is already going". When asked if he expected the argument and incident with the keys to happen, Mr. A. said "yes". He said he let things build up and then he got very mad; this happened a lot. He said Mrs. A. could get him angry by raising her voice and "picking" at him, telling him negative things about himself. He said she did things because she was lowered down to his standards now. He believed he has hardened her with his swearing and drugs and booze. Now she exposed her anger to him.

When asked what he thought she should do instead in the situation, he said she could go back to being the caring, loving person she was before their marriage.

Mr. A. said now she wants to cause him hurt because he had caused her hurt. He said he could tell by her facial expression and what she said that she was getting angry. When he saw this, it made Mr. A. angrier. "She wants to hurt me back, to bug me. That's reasonable."

According to Mr. A., he always got angry first. He said he had always had a bad temper and had been in lots of trouble. He said Mrs. A. made his temper worse by teasing him or calling him down. He said he "swore, punched things, and busted things just like a little kid".

He said he had no recollection of his childhood and most other events. He attributed this to his use of drugs and alcohol, although

he no longer used either.

QUESTION

Mr. A. was asked to describe a situation in which one's spouse's role was influenced by the other spouse.

SITUATION

"My wife won't allow me to discipline our child. I think she's scared I will hurt him," said Mr. A.

RESPONSE

Mr. A. said his wife expected to do all the disciplining herself but would let him take the child out and do things with him. He thought she was right and this situation didn't lead to conflict and he didn't want to change anything.

QUESTION

Mr. A. was asked to describe a situation in which one person's authority in the relationship was influenced by the other.

SITUATION

"I'm a nut case when it comes to putting things in order in the house." When Mrs. A. used something and didn't put it back he "went crazy".

RESPONSE

Mr. A. didn't expect his wife to misplace things; he would like her to be better organized. He got upset when he couldn't find things or they were out of order and he thought everything should be in the place he left it. He didn't believe Mrs. A. was trying to get him by moving things. He wanted her to be organized in all areas. He organized even her personal belongings: her sewing, her bras and panties. This

situation usually lead to violence according to Mr. A.: when something was not put back, he punched the fridge.

QUESTION

Mr. A. was asked if in his arguments with Mrs. A. they started arguing about one subject and then other, unrelated issues were brought in.

SITUATION/RESPONSE

Mr. A. couldn't think of an example. He stated that sometimes they would be fighting and his wife would bring up past violence or old arguments. He said this caused no problem between them.

QUESTION

Mr. A. was asked to describe a situation between them that lead to happy feelings.

SITUATION/RESPONSE

He said that when there are no financial pressures he felt relaxed; there was no tension in the air for either of them.

General Information

Mr. A. spoke at great length of his temper. He described outbursts with a wide variety of people ranging from his family to outsiders who "cut him off" in traffic. He described his anger as like "living with a time bomb". He said he often won't remember a violent incident even after it was described to him. He said he had no recollection of his childhood and other events. He attributed this to using drugs and alcohol, although he no longer used either. He expressed concern about his poor memory.

He identified Mrs. A.'s role in the conflict as increasing his

anger by teasing him or raising her voice when he was already made. He said she only struck back; she never started the violence. He stated he thought she "edges him on" because she wanted him to get violent so she could leave him. She had told him the next time it happened she would leave. He said this occured because she had lowered her standards to his.

Although Mr. A. was reluctant to attend the group at F.A.C.S. he believed it is helping. He said he and his wife were going to try to talk about things more and he was trying to think before acting.

Mr. A. described many years of drug and alcohol abuse with violence and legal difficulties, including three jail terms for assault, robbery, drugs, driving and other charges. He had changed his habits at Mrs. A.'s insistance, but lost his friends in the process. He thought he would "stay clean" now but missed his friends.

In addition, Mr. A. said his family background was very violent with abuse of the children. He had a brother who had "the same temper" and had similar experience with violence as Mr. A.

Interview With Couple A

QUESTION

The couple was then asked which, if any, of the questions asked in the individual interviews were bothersome.

RESPONSE

Mrs. A. said, "No, because we're determined to get this relationship smoothed out, because we want to spend the rest of our lives together and whatever confessions we'll have to make to help, we'll do it." Mr. A. said that he was bothered because he said last week he'd never hit his wife again and he hit her the day after.

QUESTION

The couple was asked to describe a recent conflict. In this case they elaborated the incident alluded to by Mr. A. above.

RESPONSE

Mr. A. said, "I had a problem (disagreement) with my sister; I hit her and pushed her down. I seen (sic) her at Mom's and hit her and pushed her down. I come (sic) home and told Mrs. A. what I was feeling about her ... she wouldn't give me the right answer about my sister or stand behind me so we had a big argument and I told her to shut up, she didn't and I hit her."

Mrs. A. could tell he was mad as soon as she got home. She tried to stay out of the disagreement with the sister. "We argued; vulgar words came out. Now I think I should have said to him 'Go calm down; don't let it bother you'". Mr. A. said this wouldn't have helped because he was already "real bothered." This could have been avoided if Mr. A. had "left the room or told her how I feel, but he wasn't sure he could have done that at the time. He said with this group (at F.A.C.S.) now he could do that, but not last week.

QUESTION

The couple was asked how each could tell when the other was getting angry.

RESPONSE

Mrs. A. said "by the way he looks, when he starts to swear." Mr. A. said, "by the tone of her voice".

QUESTION

The couple was asked how could each tell when there was going to

be violence.

RESPONSE

Mrs. A. answered "the same as when he gets angry only he flexes his muscles." Mr. A. said "I don't know -- my adrenalin goes crazy."

QUESTION

The couple was asked what each did when they sensed this was happening.

RESPONSE

Mrs. A. said she hoped they could talk about things; they were going to try this. Mr. A. said he agreed with her.

QUESTION

The couple was asked how much they each worry about what the other might do.

RESPONSE

Mrs. A. said she didn't worry about it, she would take a little more but she won't live in this situation 10 years if it continued. "This was the last time for him hitting me." Mr. A. replied, "Threats".

QUESTION

The couple was asked who had more freedom in their relationship.

RESPONSE

Mr. A. said, "She does. As long as there's nothing critical around here, I'll tell her to go out or ask what she wants to do; try and get rid of her". Mrs. A. said the question was difficult to answer. She said "We both place expectations on each other. I expect so much of him and he expects so much of me ... we even each other out. I'd say he has the 'upper hand' in the relationship, he's the head of the

household."

QUESTION

The couple was asked who had more power in the relationship.

RESPONSE

Mr. A. said he had more physical power but not mental power. Mrs. A. said both of them tried to make decisions; it was shared.

QUESTION

The couple was asked who liked being husband or wife more.

RESPONSE

Mr. A. said "The cat, who cares?" To which Mrs. A. replied, "Are you saying you don't like being married?" Mr. A. answered, "I don't know. I don't mind." Mrs. A. said "I like being married to Mr. A. very much. You're caring about the other person." Mr. A. responded, "I like being married to Mrs. A. There's gotta be changes on both parts. Our goals got to (sic) be the same."

QUESTION

The couple was asked who was more possessive in the relationship.

RESPONSE

Mr. A. said "I am more possessive. What's mine is mine. You're mine, the baby is mine, this ashtray is mine." Mrs. A. said "Yes I know about what is yours. We are both possessive of each other. I think we're both pretty possessiye of each other. We each like to know where the other is."

Mr. A. said he "wanted to know about her jobs, what she did." He thought she didn't show that much interest in his jobs; he wanted her

"to share her knowledge with him." He said that Mrs. A. wouldn't let him touch her handi-crafts till they're finished. He told her that was possessive. She said "It doesn't make any difference to me."

QUESTION

The couple was asked to describe their relationship now.

RESPONSE

Mrs. A. offered, "Levelling out." Mrs. A. said, "When you decide to make a relationship permanent you have to do a lot of giving. He's had to give a lot to me and I've had to give a lot to him. We've had to weed out the parts of the other person's personality the other one doesn't like. He never liked me to smoke. Quitting cigarettes was for him." Mr. A. replied, "Quitting dope and booze was for you." Mrs. A. said "We each had to give up things for the other. Once I become the person I think he says he wants me to be then he'll stop grumbling and vice versa: he'll start the temper controlling."

Mr. A. said the violence group at F.A.C.S. helped him "see the light at the end of the tunnel in the relationship."

QUESTION

The couple was asked what they like to have happen in their relationship.

RESPONSE

Mr. A. answered "That both of us will be happy." Mrs. A. answered "That we'd learn to understand each other, accept each other without getting impatient.

QUESTION

The couple was asked how they will know the changes have occurred.

RESPONSE

Mr. A. said "When the arguments stop, the house is all done, when I'm sitting back and not having to worry about money ... when I won't have to worry about anything." Mrs. A. said "There will be a calmness there. I have it at times but it goes. It has improved a lot. Now when we argue I don't have the sense of panic he'll get drunk or stoned ... the changes started since Christmas or sometime. I've decided in myself that I'll accept whatever he does ..."

QUESTION

The couple was asked to describe marriage to a person from another planet. Also to describe how their marriage compared to the ideal.

RESPONSE

Mrs. A. said "Earthlings are created man and woman. The flow of life goes on because of the union of man and woman -- a sacred thing if you're dedicated. Taking on a relationship means sharing everything, thoughts, bed, each other's life with the other ... total surrender to each other. I'd say our relationship fits this ideal. We are dedicated to each other. We do share everything. Even though we haven't reached a good level of communication because we're both trapped in our own thoughts, I think the goal of staying together and raising our baby and growing old together is a common one." Mr. A. added, "It's appealing."

Mr. A. described marriage as something that "can be good if you put good things into it or bad if you put bad things in. When you do both it just adds excitement to your life."

Mrs. A. retorted to him, "Who wants to play hurting games? It's

not good. We can do something about what's going on in our world."

General Information

Mrs. A. stated "After last night (at the couples group at F.A.C.S.) we all expressed our problems, and we found out we weren't alone. When you listen to other's problems it takes your mind off your own." Mr. A. said his problem had always been "expressing myself -- it's my lower mentality. Tonight we're going to start expressing our feelings to each other. It won't always be the anger coming out." Also Mr. A. said he was glad Mrs. A. was attending so she could help him remember what has happened.

Mrs. A. revealed that her husband went to jail before they were married. He was still in jail when their child was born. She described this time as "hard for Mr. A.; he had some bad experiences. But it was good for me; it gave me time to pull myself together for when he came home."

Couple B

Basic Data

Couple B had been married for 2 years. It was the first marriage for both. They had one child under age 1. Mr. B. was 23 and employed as a foreman. Mrs. B. was a 24 year old homemaker. Both had a grade twelve education.

Interview with Wife B

QUESTION

Mrs. B. was asked to describe a situation in which one spouse's actions influenced the other.

SITUATION

She described a situation in which Mr. B. would restrict her from wearing makeup.

RESPONSES

Mrs. B. had not expected her husband's reaction to her wearing makeup. She believed she was her own person and her husband shouldn't have placed this restriction on her unless she was overdoing makeup and looking bad. She reacted to this situation by speaking up and he got explosive. In this situation he stomped out and their evening was ruined. She didn't know how he would have wanted her to respond. She believed he was trying to "get at" her although she thought he might pick at her because he was having a problem of his own. "Now we would sit down and talk about each other's feeling and we'll drop it. But then we couldn't", she said. "Another situation like this is his taking control of who I could see and where I could go. He knew he could do it (in the beginning); I was passive. I'd rather do what he wanted than fight. Before I was married I said I'd never let a man talk to me like that. I would try to tell him not to go out but it didn't work. I would become enraged: I'd listen to him but he wouldn't listen to me. The beatings started when we had no communication. Now we have accepted each other's friends. We sit down and talk things out."

QUESTION

Mrs. B. was asked to recall situations in which one or the other's role was influenced by the other.

SITUATION

When they first were married, Mr. B. tried to keep her from going

to work. "I loved working and enjoyed my role as an independent woman."

RESPONSE

"We'd fight constantly about my working," Mrs. B. Said. She hadn't expected this reaction from Mr. B. He beat her so badly she couldn't hide the bruises any more and finally quit work. During this time she was three to five months pregnant. She said Mr. B. did not understand how much this bothered her. She reacted by taking it personally, being down on herself and suicidal. She believed him when he told her when he beat her, "If you were a good wife I wouldn't have to beat you."

"This finally changed when I began to leave. At first he'd take all my money and credit cards and keys so I couldn't leave. This went on and the beatings continued. One day I decided to take the baby and go to a shelter. This changed the way I looked at myself. I knew we had to have help. We separated for a while."

"In the past I'd hate him more every time he hit me. I'd say angry things and he'd hurt me more. The more I let this happen the worse it got. I'd leave and then return because I knew he didn't want to do it but couldn't control himself. After a point I began hitting back. I did things I never thought I'd do. I'd keep at him and at him. Sometimes I'd hit him first."

Mrs. B. said she was able to tell when Mr. B. was going to be violent by the way he looked, spoke and by his eyes. She said he also tensed. "When this happens I'd back off and apologize. We'll sit down. calm down, and talk out whatever made him feel like hitting me. I can now trust him 80%. Now I can say how I feel and he can take it." In the past Mrs. B. tried to do what Mr. B. wanted her to do to stop the

violence. He didn't want her to talk to anyone about the problem so she didn't. Now that's changed.

A second major situation with regard to roles leading to conflict and violence was Mr. B.'s role as parent. Mrs. B. criticized her husband's handling of their child. She expected this disagreement would happen because in her family only women looked after children; men weren't involved. She said she used to worry about him getting violent with their child but was not worried any more. This resulted from their talking things out more.

QUESTION

Mrs. B. was asked to describe a situation in which one person's authority was changed by the other.

SITUATION/RESPONSE

Mrs. B. stated there were no problems in the area of power or authority now. It was equal.

QUESTION

Mrs. B. was asked if in arguments with Mr. B, they began arguing about one area and other, unrelated issues were brought in.

SITUATION

When they argue, Mrs. B. said, each brought up something that happened in the past. They began with one problem and ended up with 20.

RESPONSE

She said this became a regular practice between them. It had not at first lead to violence, but to severe verbal abuse. Eventually the violence happened after the name calling.

Mrs. B. said this has changed now. They were able to sit down and

try to understand the other person's getting violent.

QUESTION

Mrs. B. was asked to describe a situation that resulted in good feelings between them.

SITUATION

"We both sit down and try very hard to understand the other when we get upset. We try and do things for each other."

RESPONSE

"Until the groups began we worked at talking things out but now we have also learned to control our tempers. We both feel happier and closer. This couldn't have happened before."

Another situation was when Mr. B. "will quietly take the baby for a walk and let me sleep late, or he will leave lots of time for me to get ready to go out so I can get fixed up nice," Mrs. B. said.

General Information

Mrs. B. described a dramatic change in their behaviour after she went to the Shelter. She got counselling and Mr. B. got referred to F.A.C.S. It had a "big impact" on both of us. She said they were able to be constructive about their differences and were both happier.

She said they were both violent in the past. She believed she caused his violence by her tone of voice, how she expressed herself and her facial expression. She reported there was a lot of violence in his family: between parents, from parents to children and among brothers and sisters.

In some situations she was still cautious and "afraid to a point." She believed he was still capable of violence if he was upset. She

thought he too was afraid the violence may return. She said that they were trying all the possibilities to get rid or it. If it returned she thought nothing would work.

On the other hand she had no concern about becoming violent herself again. She said "it's the lowest thing I've ever done. I realize now its O.K. to talk to people about problems. It will never happen again. I don't ever want to be so low again. I now have strength." Mr. B. had been very supportive. Mrs. B. was taking a course and planned to be working. When he admitted he was wrong, "To me, he is trying", she said.

Interview With Husband B.

QUESTION

Mr. B. was asked to describe a situation in which one spouse's actions influenced the other.

SITUATION

"Both of us took the keys to the car when we were mad, eh?"

RESPONSE

"We did this so much we got to expect it," according to Mr. B. Mrs. B. would get upset; Mrs. B. responded, "You're staying here," and took his keys. Mr. B. said he got the keys back and left for 2 or 3 hours. When he returned nothing was resolved; the fighting resumed. "It was like a mind game to get the other one upset," said Mr. B. His wife tried to get him upset because she knew he didn't want to talk. Mr. B. thought "I'll show you, you are not going to run this household and I'd do the same thing. It got so I'd do it to make her madder. It went on every other day to make each other mad."

Mr. B. said he could tell his wife was getting angry by the way

she talked in a sarcastic tone and had a sarcastic look as well as "different little things." He was able to change this by asking her "What is the matter?" and sitting down and talking about, rather than getting angry.

In the past two or three months Mr. B. said they have been working out their problems to resolve the situation. Before, they used to get the other person mad on purpose. "For example when she'd get mad I'd pretend I couldn't hear her or tell her to "hit me again." Then she'd get mad and break things, kick over the lamp, etc. The role reversal made me feel better I guess. It was really stupid."

Another example of restrictions on each other was Mr. B.'s feeling that Mrs. B. could always control him by her mood. "If she shows she cares I'll do anything for her." This lead to good feelings for both of them. Mr. B. also reversed this by starting to pick at Mrs. B. "I can put her in a bad mood just like that" (snaps his fingers).

QUESTION

Mr. B. was asked to describe a situation in which one spouse's role was influenced by the other.

SITUATION

"When our child needed discipline, as a father, I would discipline him." Mrs. B. tried to stop me.

RESPONSE

Mr. B. stated, "I don't listen to her now." He used to go on doing the disciplining to bother Mrs. B. He said his wife was trying to "get at" him. If she was in a vengeful mood she came after him.

A second situation in which the role of employee/breadwinner was

interfered with by Mrs. B. was when he had to work a lot of overtime. He acknowledged that he was spending time away from home on purpose to get away from the fights, so he expected Mrs. B. to get upset. He said he could see her point but he was stubborn. He also said he could have changed things but it would have only meant more violence. When he did come home he was in a very bad mood and would fight.

A third role of Mr. B.'s that was interfered with by Mrs. B.'s actions was that of husband. He said she used to take off for days and he was very jealous. He believed she did this to make him angry and he "slapped her out" which caused more violence between them.

As well, Mr. B. had lots of expectations about the perfect wife. He said he wanted control over everything, including Mrs. B. Now he realized "I was expecting too much. If I didn't get it -- bang -- violence. Now she knows I don't expect so much from her ... I want her to be happy."

QUESTION

Mr. B. was asked to describe a situation in which one person's authority in the marriage was influenced by the other.

SITUATION/RESPONSE

Mr. B. stated "I always used to make the decisions. She felt she didn't have an equal say ... now we don't do anything unless we both agree." It was the same with caring for our baby. It was a big issue but Mr. B. allowed her to make the decisions and she did most of it. He spent a lot of time with the baby when he was off work and did more with the baby then. "There's no conflict there," he said.

In the past Mr. B. reported they used to classify everything as

"his" or "hers". Now this was not a problem, although it used to lead to all kinds of violence. "We communicate better now."

QUESTION

Mr. B. was asked if in his arguments with Mrs. B. they started on one subject and then other, unrelated issues or problems were brought in.

SITUATION

In an argument Mr. B. brought up the past, especially an old boyfriend of hers.

RESPONSE

Mr. B. said "It would always lead to a big explosion. She'd say something to bug me and we'd fight. I'd also see how jealous I could make her." After a while Mr. B. said they expected to fight; fights became habits. He said they fought once a day at least. "I blame myself for the fights; I started most of them" he said.

This changed when they decided the violence was beyond them. They agreed to quit bringing up the past. More change happened when Mrs. B. went to the Shelter. Mr. B. said, "It opened my eyes. I realized if I didn't get my act together I'd lost my wife and child. This was a turning point." Prior to that Mr. B. said he had made some progress but not enough. The big change began with the group he attended at F.A.C.S.

Mr. B. had described a situation leading to good feelings when he discussed Mrs. B. controlling him with her mood.

General Information

Mr. B. reported he had been very violent outside his marriage. He

fighting in high school and got into legal trouble, fought in bars and elsewhere. He said he was never violent with Mrs. B. before the marriage or with his previous girlfriends.

Mr. B. said his guilt and depression about being violent caused him to actively seek help. He didn't see himself getting violent anymore. "It's 'think before you do'", he said. He did not believe he was 100% yet, but felt he will stop the violence.

Interview With Couple B

QUESTION

The couple was asked which, if any, of the questions asked in the individual interviews were bothersome.

RESPONSE

Mrs. B. said there was nothing. Mr. B. said nothing bothered him either. "I've learned to open up about these things. It probably would have been different 2 months ago but now I can look back on what's happened and nor feel bad or embarrassed or ashamed."

QUESTION

The couple was asked to describe a recent conflict.

RESPONSE (long delay)

Mrs. B. suggested "Maybe when I left for the Shelter a few months ago." Mr. B. did not remember the content of the fight. Mrs. B. said it was about her moving and what she was going to take. Mr. B. remembered, "Yeah, I didn't want her to take certain things and I was angry that she was really going to do it. It was a really bad scene." Mrs. B. said she wanted to move when he wasn't home because she was afraid of him. They ended up fighting over a photograph. Mr. B. tried to restrain Mrs. B.

They ripped each other's jackets and she left with the child. That was the last conflict.

QUESTION

The couple was asked how each could tell when the other was getting violent.

RESPONSE

Mrs. B. said, "By the way he looks." Mr. B. said by the tone in her voice. Both said this hasn't happened much recently and when it did they sat down and talked it out.

QUESTION

Each couple was asked how much they worry about the violence returning.

RESPONSE

Mrs. B. said, "Not at all -- it used to be 100% when we had a money or other problem." Mr. B. agreed. "I'm still not sure I won't get carried away, especially the odd time when I get angry. I won't be 100% till it progresses more."

QUESTION

The couple was asked who had more freedom in the relationship.

RESPONSE

Mrs. B. said "Both; neither." Mr. B. said, "I used to have in the relationship. Now it's shared equally."

QUESTION

The couple was asked who had more power in the relationship.

RESPONSE

Mrs. B. "That's equal too." Mr. B. agreed. "Usually I'd have more power but she started to retaliate. We shared responsibility for money, for child rearing. Everybody shares. We've learned to regulate that."

Mr. B. said "It's easier now at least now I don't have to take everything she says as an insult and smack her." Mrs. B. added, "Now you can say what you feel without violence. If the other is upset and says things we can still go on doing what we were doing." Mr. B. said, "You're not afraid to speak your mind."

QUESTION

The couple was asked who liked being husband or wife more.

RESPONSE

Mr. B. responded, "I think we're both happy the way we are. Mr. B. stated, "Lately, I feel I like to please her. I feel the need to satisfy myself by making her feel good. I bake or clean as a surprise for her. I enjoy doing these things for her."

QUESTION

The couple was asked who was more possessive in the relationship.

RESPONSE

Mrs. B. said, "I feel I am, but it's also equal. I used to be terrified if he'd even look at a picture (of a woman)." Mr. B. agreed, "She thought I was having an affair with my secretary. Then I thought she was seeing her old boyfriends." Mrs. B. said there was a recent incident in which they both felt they handled it very well.

QUESTION

The couple was asked to describe their relationship now.

RESPONSE

Mrs. B. said, "very satisfying." Mr. B. said, "very comfortable. I feel like I want to be home; I don't want to work all the time."

QUESTION

What would you have liked to have happen in your relationship?

RESPONSE

Mrs. B. said she would have liked things to continue changing to get to 100%. "I think we've come very far and I want it to continue on." Mr. B. said, "I would like her to get out and work so she'd feel better. That will improve things between us another 20%."

QUESTION

The couple was asked how they would know when these changes have occured.

RESPONSE

Mrs. B. said, "the air around Mr. B., the atmosphere, will improve. He'll take time to tell me about his day." She said she never used to have time to listen. Mr. B. said, "Yeah -- that used to frustrate me. Now every night we talk about things." In unison they said, "Nine o'clock." After the baby went to bed they put time aside to talk, and they related their frustrations to each other and said this was better than everything building up. This had just started since the group last week.

QUESTION

The couple was asked to describe marriage to a person from another planet.

RESPONSE

Mr. B. said, "in my eyes it is a bonding between two people in which you wouldn't expect so much from the other person. Two people in a lasting bonding where you can bring happiness to the other person." Mrs. B. said, "I think it is emotionally, physically fulfilling and challenging, creative."

QUESTION

The couple was asked to compare their relationship to the ideal.

RESPONSE

Mrs. B. said, "It's all of those things. Before I didn't feel that way but now I do." Mr. B. added, "I think there is a bonding between us, I can feel it. I'm very much in love. I care very much for her and the baby. Before it was a bad scene but now its fulfilling a bonding."

General Information

Mr. and Mrs. B. acknowledged they have made a lot of changes in a short time. They both said they couldn't cope with a backslide now. Mrs. B. said if things went back to violence she thought they would get a divorce and Mr. B. agreed. They said they believed they have tried everything and if it didn't work, Mrs. B. said she hoped they can "part civilly and meet somebody who could meet their expectations and not set such high standards."

Couple C

Basic Data

Mr. and Mrs. C. were married for two years; they have one child under one year. Mr. C. was 40. He had two years university; he was unemployed. Mrs. C. was 42, had a grade ten education and was a homemaker. Mrs. C.

had been married once before; her 10 year old child from her previous relationship lived with her. She had two adult children also.

The couple was temporarily separated at the time of the interviews. They spent weekends together and kept in close contact.

Interview With Wife C

QUESTION

Mrs. C. was asked to describe a situation in which one spouse's actions influenced the other.

SITUATION

Early in the marriage, Mrs. C. was doing laundry and Mr. C. told her she wasn't folding the towels right. He was critical of her housekeeping generally.

RESPONSE

"I stood up to him. I gave him feedback right there. I am an independent person and fight like hell. I was so controlled growing up; I don't want that now." Mrs. C. said Mr. C.'s actions were a total surprise to her. They had known each other for years and he had not acted this way before the marriage. When she stood up to him, a big fight occured. Mrs. C. thought Mr. C. acted like this because he was still attached to his mother. His mother controlled him and he couldn't get along with her.

In the situation, Mrs. C. told her husband what she thought about his being attached to his mother. She said they had a fight. "I'm totally surprised I acted that bad." Mr. C. hit her and broke her jaw. She thought this happened because she reacted to him in an angry way.

Mrs. C. said she would have liked to have gotten counselling earlier

to find out what was happening. She said Mr. C. changed so much after they were married. "It's like each person has an idea of what a husband or wife is like and his was the opposite of what it was before." He got mad when she told him he had changed, she says. "He says it was all my fault, that I provoked it."

When this incident occured, Mrs. C. went to a Shelter. Mr. C. was referred to F.A.C.S. They separated when she left the Shelter but planned to get back together "when he can control his violence." In the year they were separated, Mr. and Mrs. C. received couple counselling and he had individual and group counselling. "Even in the counselling it has taken Mr. C. a long time to figure things out. He is trying now to stop and think about things -- he thinks a lot, and is just starting to understand my reaction to the violence."

QUESTION

Mrs. C. was asked to recall a situation in which one or the other's role was influenced by the other.

SITUATION

Mr. C. had a very distinct idea of how a father should act and Mrs. C. did not want him to act that way with her older child. Mr. C. called the child a name if he didn't obey; Mrs. C. interfered.

RESPONSE

Mrs. C. said her husband got angry. She interfered because she was afraid he would hit the child. He used to hit his nephews who lived with him at his mother's house. Mr. C. responded by calling her names, "all the bad things he wanted to say to his mother." Mrs. C. said when she stood up to him (verbally) it triggered the feeling in Mr. C. that she was going to be domineering like his mother. According to Mrs. C.,

her husband would want to do what she did (in disciplining the child), but he got so mad.

Mrs. C. said she wasn't sure if Mr. C. would become violent with their baby. "It is hard to say but I've seen him get mad and then hug him and kiss him 'hard'." She said, "I don't think I know him well now; there are too many changes. He used to be hot headed but sensitive and nice." In the past he got angry and had threatened or punched employers, for example. She said he now was showing some positive changes; he used to call her "stupid" if she did something he thought was silly. Now she said he still thought the same way but didn't say it. She said the group he attended helped a lot but she would not have him back "till he sees what it means to be free. He still has to grow a lot; I still have to grow a lot."

QUESTION

Mrs. C. was asked to describe a situation in which one person's authority in the marriage was changed by the other.

SITUATION

He didn't always know what to do and Mrs. C. says she thought he wanted her to control him. But at the same time she thought he didn't want her to do it.

RESPONSE

"When he can't make decisions, say about bills, I will go ahead and make them and he will scream and yell about it." But next time he won't do anything again, she said.

Mrs. C. said Mr. C. acted this way because he felt bad about being out of work. She said he used to be able to make decisions about money

and other major issues but stopped when he lost his job. "It is like he doesn't know how to do anything anymore." But Mr. C. would not agree with her, she says.

QUESTION

Mrs. C. was asked if in arguments with Mr. C. they began arguing about one area and other, unrelated areas were brought in.

SITUATION

After the violence happened when Mrs. C.'s jaw was broken, she constantly brought up her face in any argument.

RESPONSE

Mr. C. had never said he was sorry he broke her face. She got angry at first because every time she tried to eat it was painful and he didn't understand that it was "just not over for her." She said sometimes she still worried about her appearance and got angry. It took me a long time before I felt sorry for him."

QUESTION

Mrs. C. was asked to describe a situation between them in which good feelings resulted.

SITUATION/RESPONSE

Mrs. C. said that now "things are good when we are together; we don't fight much." She said, Mr. C. was a better parent to their baby and her child and they liked being together.

General Information

Mrs. C. had a number of traumatic experiences before meeting Mr. C.: an alcoholic husband, a child who died in a crib death, a serious illness

and problems with her children from her first marriage. She had received psychiatric help off and on in the past. She said she wished she would have continued in therapy with Mr. C. before they were married.

During the time Mr. C. was in group therapy at F.A.C.S., Mrs. C was involved in therapy off and on at F.A.C.S. too. She said she felt Mr. C. wouldn't open up with her there so she withdrew. She maintained contact with the therapists, expecially when there were problems. She felt she had to "push" Mr. C. to make contact there.

Prior to their marriage, Mrs. C. had lived independently and Mr. C. had only lived with his mother, both in Eastern Canada. She says it was a good thing they moved to Alberta and got married so he was away from his family.

Interview with Mr. C.

QUESTION

Mr. C. was asked to describe a situation in which one spouse's actions influenced the other.

SITUATION

Mr. C. recalled an incident where he was playing hockey. He usually played and came straight home afterwards. One time he came home late and an argument ensued.

RESPONSE

"There was a fight but not like when I hit her and broke her jaw. It was the same situation, I had gone to a get together after the game and she wanted to go along. At that time we started fighting about different members of our families. I was telling her this and that and she kept on and I just hit her. Now, more than a year later, we can

sit and talk about it."

Mr. C. said he had not expected an argument in the violent incident, but the tone of her voice and things she said got it going. "Now I can hear the same things and not get bothered." Mr. C. said he told those things to people in the violence group (at F.A.C.S.) whom he described as "very, very violent." He thought he did not belong in that group. "The nature of my incident is not like their's; they can't relate. They have tremendous anger ... I sit and think about things and as a result I can deal with things." The group had taught Mr. C. how to relate more objectively. He compared his situation to other members' situations and believed his was more reasonable.

Mr. C. said he could tell in a situation with Mrs. C. that she was getting angry by the tone of her voice. Sometimes she tried to anger him on purpose, "just to see my reaction and probably how I'd handle the situation," he said. Mrs. C. might have tried to make Mr. C. angry to see if he was still reacting to her voice and not to what she was saying. Mr. C. said, "All people just listen to the tone (of voice). You're taken away by the sound."

When asked if Mrs. C. tried to "get" him by provoking anger he says, "No, but we might think differently (about something)." He said she understood what he does by watching his actions and listening, then telling him about it. "She will notice something and I'll realize she is right."

QUESTIONS

Mr. C. was asked to recall a situation in which one or the other's role was influenced by the other.

SITUATION

In being a parent Mr. C. said he used to disagree with his wife, especially in dealing with her older child.

RESPONSE

Mr. C. said he had previously thought in terms of "temperaments." He didn't know about other conditions and had to reassess his way of dealing with the child, trying to put himself in the child's position. "Now there are no more disagreements between us" (Mr. C. and the child).

A second role that Mr. C. felt had been disturbed but not by his wife is that of provider. He said, "I feel very, very useless, I am active, very energetic." He said that neither of them interfered with each other's roles now.

QUESTION

Mr. C. was asked to describe a situation in which one person's authority in the marriage was changed by the other.

SITUATION

Mr. C. said there were no problems or disagreements over authority. He said if he made a decision over parenting or what the family did, Mr. C. didn't interfere. There were arguments in the past, however, which was why Mr. C. wanted to stay in the group. "Every time (at the group) I learn something." He said he could always tell when his wife was in a bad mood or angry because she was quieter. He asked her what was wrong but "can't make her talk more." He believed this would change for her as it had for him.

QUESTION

Mr. C. was asked if in arguments with Mrs. C. they begin arguing

about one area and other unrelated issues were brought in.

SITUATION

Mr. C. said they often argued about their situation as opposed to their families. They also brought in each other's brothers and sisters.

RESPONSE

While Mr. C. did not expect this to happen he was glad it did because "what's inside will eventually come out. Now I know how she feels about me and to a lesser extent, my family."

Another example was when Mrs. C. and Mr. C. were arguing and she brought in things other people do (family activities) and the argument changed. Mr. C. believed she was trying to show him about family life by examples. "She is a smart woman."

QUESTION

Mr. C. was asked to describe a situation between them in which good feelings resulted.

SITUATION/RESPONSE

When Mrs. C. said she liked the way Mr. C. handled her older child, or that Mr. C. was not so uptight about it. "I think she expects me to treat him well ... it's the way I treat him now. I tell him what he does is silly but not that he is silly."

General Information

Mr. C. was born in a Third World country. He had lived in Canada for most of his adult life. He had slight difficulty with the language. Both he and Mrs. C. said their backgrounds were very similar despite the obvious cultural differences.

In the course of Mr. C.'s therapy at F.A.C.S., he had numerous

neurological and psychological tests but so far results were inconclusive. A brain tumor was suspected. There was some disagreement among the professionals as to whether the results and whether he should be able to work in his regular occupation again. This disturbed him.

He was also upset by his long standing unemployment. He was considering going back to school after vocational counselling. He recently lost a good job with a fellow country man and was depressed about it. The man was verbally abusive to him and Mr. C. experienced being on the receiving end of verbal abuse for the first time. This situation seemed very sensitive for him.

The couple had been separated for several months. Mr. C. wanted to be at home, but Mrs. C. was still more sure she can be certain of his violence. He stated he hoped to be home by the end of May.

Interview With Couple C

QUESTION

The couple was asked which, if any, of the questions asked in the individual interviews were bothersome.

RESPONSE

"The whole thing bothered me, talking about the past, I felt I stirred up a lot of stuff," said Mrs. C. "The worst part was talking about the big row. My feelings came back like that (snaps fingers)." She continued, "It was the main area of betrayal ... it takes time to rebuild that trust." Mr. C. asked her how she felt now. She said, "If we talked about it now, I'd get wound up again." Mr. C. said he was not aware of Mrs. C. getting riled up when she talked about this again. Mrs. C. interjected, "He'd be the first to say 'This is the past; forget it', but it's so connected up to the future for me. Not in the

sense 'in the past you did this or that to me'. It comes up when I'm trying to explain things and I just start thinking about it."

Mrs. C. said "I have a tremendous need to be honest but I don't think he's prepared for what it means." She said she often keeps things inside, because she is afraid of how Mr. C. will react. Mr. C. said repeatedly she should "be honest". She answered, "But if I tell you I'm thinking about all the things you did and wish you were 15,000 miles away..." He replied, "Oh, that". They agreed there are things they couldn't forget but Mr. C. suggested they should deal with them when they arose. Mrs. C. said, "When I talk about these things I know it's upsetting for Mr. C., but I have to get them worked out inside myself by talking."

QUESTION

The couple was asked to describe a recent conflict.

RESPONSE

"When was it?" Mr. C. asked. They both laughed. "I think it was in February," he said. She said she couldn't remember what it was about, then recalled. "It was when I told our therapist I wouldn't be back. I felt we were 'nit picking' (in the sessions)". That was when we were going to get the divorce. One weekend the kids and I were sick and Mr. C. said he was going to be away Saturday at a party. I said I couldn't go; he got mad and yelled. I don't believe in men or women going out alone but he was free to do it. He just has to accept my views. He called back later and said he wasn't going and I told him not to come back (home). I had been nice during the week when he was home and I thought this was a 'cheap shot'."

Mr. C. said he expected this reaction. He didn't know what he

would have liked to have changed. Mrs. C. said she thought he would have wanted her to say "that's nice" and press his clothes. When asked what she would have changed, she said "now to show how I felt ... I don't want to control him or fight all the time about it ... I don't want to live my life giving ultimatums (sic)."

QUESTION

The couple was asked how each could tell when the other was angry.

RESPONSE

Mrs. C. said "I get angry first. He can always tell it on me." Mr. C. said, "I don't like it when you don't talk." "The reason I don't talk, I won't bring it up, I don't want to do that now...." she trailed off. He replied, "You are a master at that!" She said "When I'm not talking I'm often just preoccupied." He asked, "But what if I asked you?" Then you can count on an hour of how I feel. I go quiet because I'm thinking. He understands but it annoys him," said Mrs. C. "If you have something on your mind, you say what it is" Mr. C. pronounced.

QUESTION

The couple was asked who had more freedom in the relationship.

RESPONSE

Mrs. C. said, "Now me and the baby; not because of Mr. C. although he has stereotyped ideas of women. He'd let me go out for lunch now (not before). He's not the type to go out all the time but I believe he should go out with the boys once in a while." Mr. C. said that he thought their freedom is shared, but "If I have to go somewhere, I go. Being downtown I can walk anywhere." Mrs. C. said, "I feel his time

downtown in his apartment has been free while I've felt cooped up with the baby." Mrs. C. said, "you can go out now, you know."

QUESTION

The couple was asked who had more power in the relationship.

RESPONSE

Mr. C. said, "I don't know if either of us has more." Mrs. C. replied, "I could see how I could get it but I don't want it. I think I understand the thing about power and control better than he does. I don't want it but maybe I have it. I want to share. We try to look at things from both points of view. I've has more experience with the kids and the house than he has and can do more. I was hoping for someone not to control me but to do more."

QUESTION

The cuople was asked who lived being husband or wife more.

RESPONSE

Mrs. C. said, "If it's equal, that's OK. When I was younger, I was at a stage where I didn't need marriage. Later I needed the physical closeness. I had friends but felt lonely. I like married life and I like to have a man to cook and care for, and we've had another child which is part of it". Mr. C. said, "I agree".

QUESTION

The couple was asked who was more possessive in the relationship.

RESPONSE

Mrs. C. said, "I'm not, but Mr. C. would say I was. If you don't have a good enough relationship to let another person in, it's no good." No response was elicited from Mr. C.

QUESTION

The couple was asked to describe their relationship now.

RESPONSE

Mr. C. said, "Fair and progressing." Mrs. C. said that she felt "in limbo; I've gone through a lot of stages. Like his relationship with my child is improving."

QUESTION

The couple was asked what changes they would like to see in their marriage.

RESPONSE

Mr. C. said "We need to understand why and try to find new ways to have a constant and honest relationship."

QUESTION

The couple was asked when they will know the changes have occured.

RESPONSE

Mrs. C. said, "I'll just know. I'll feel closer, we'll be physically close, we can enjoy going to bed again. We won't feel separate." Mr. C. said, "I feel the same."

QUESTION

The couple was asked to describe marriage to a person from another planet.

RESPONSE

Mr. C. said, "He'd have to do a lot of thinking in marriage. It's a good thing. If you don't deal with it the proper way or right way it can be very destructive." Mrs. C. said, "First, I'd say there are two species: male and female. They feel very differently about things

but are intellectually equal. They come together to have a close relationship which is a lot of work getting to know each other, to raise the rest of the race. It is a very good way to live but takes a lot of work and talking."

QUESTION

The couple was asked how their relationship compared to this ideal.

RESPONSE

Mrs. C. said, "Male and female, we're working on it. We're way far away from what it could be. I think in a good close relationship you have a deep knowledge of the other. I have friends I'm closer to than Mr. C., but I don't have the physical closeness with them. We are working on getting closer and knowing each other better. I believe in becoming one but not in a smothering way. It's nice to have another human being who knows me really deep down. I think that's what everybody wants." Mr. C. said that he agreed with Mrs. C. and added, "we should go places more, but that will come in time."

General Information

The issues arising from the violent incident when Mr. C. broke his wife's jaw were discussed at great length. The reactions to the incident influenced both the other major concerns for the couple: Mr. C. moving back in and the family returning to Eastern Canada.

Mrs. C. said she gets upset when she thinks about moving back East. "I try and think about all the positive things, but am bombarded by the negative. I am afraid of getting back with his family." Mr. C. found this strange. He says, "She has been there before. She has reached the stage where she can deal with it. There should be no over-reacting,

getting upset, anxiety." Mrs. C. replied, "I know a lot of things, but that doesn't mean you aren't going to get caught up in things. I can see it happening to him. I can see the problems of now knowing how to deal with it. You don't always know how you're going to react. It was shocking the way I acted all on emotions (when her jaw was broken), and the more he screamed and hollered the more I got that way."

Mr. C. explained his wife's reactions, "You had the operations on your mouth; you had the baby. You look it all in physically, with things being particularly unstable. You've got to give yourself a little more time to connect up and heal yourself, to let things fall into perspective."

To this Mrs. C. replied, "It's going to take a long time to trust him and for me to think that all those things he's learned are working, although I see it becoming a part of him."

Mrs. C. wanted to return home in a month. Mrs. C. was not sure that even though "he knows in his head, he might not be able to do it" she said. "I still think to myself, 'There's a shelter in every city'. I want to be ready to be up and out."

Both Mr. and Mrs. C. wanted to continue working on their relationship regardless of whether he returned home. Mrs. C. said, "We have always had that closeness, a spiritual closeness. It is the deeper level (between us) even though the surface is pretty messed up." Mr. C. questioned whether this closeness was due to "my not being here (all the time), or thinking about things and talking." Mrs. C. believed this separation had caused them to work harder on the relationship and brought the closeness.

CHAPTER FIVE

RESULTS

Overview

The results of the data are described in the context of relational rules, rule violations, the reactions of spouses to conflicts, behaviour identified as leading to violence, and attributions. The attributions identified in reactions between spouses were presented. Relationships between attributions and violence and attributions and rule violations were described, followed by a summary of the results.

Results

Identification of Relational Rules

Relational rules have been described by Denzin (1970) as: (a) Rules of deference and demeanor, governing the person's behaviour in public or private, (b) Rules providing mechanisms for regulating secrecy, knowledge or personal problems in the relationship, (c) Task rules specifying who does what with whom, and (d) Rules specifying conduct when not in the presence of the other (p. 131). In addition, Hotaling (1980) suggested that relational rules between intimates were implicit, ambiguous and undefined.

Due to the implicit nature of relational rules, many of them were inferred rather than reported directly.

Rules Identified In This Study

Some examples of overt rules inferred from the interviews were noted. Some existed in the past, some existed at the time of interview.

1. Rules of deference and demeanor

   (a) Both Mr. A. and Mr. B. could hit their wives but not the babies.

(b) Mr. A. was not to swear in front of the baby.

(c) Mrs. B. could only wear make-up with Mr. B.'s permission.

2. Rules regulating secrecy, knowledge or personal problems of the marriage.

(a) Mr. and Mrs. B. were not to discuss their marital problems with anyone other than themselves.

(b) Mr. and Mrs. C. were not to discuss their relationship with their families.

3. Task rules

(a) Mrs. A. was to keep the house spotless.

(b) All three wives were the primary caregivers to children.

(c) Husbands were expected to be "providers".

4. Rules of conduct when out of the other's presence.

(a) Mr. A. could not see his friends, go to bars, drink or use drugs.

(b) Mrs. B. could not visit her friends or go out alone.

(c) Mr. C. was not to attend mixed parties or dances alone.

Some additional rules were inferred from the data. These rules were not discussed directly but were strongly implied. Examples of these undefined rules were: (a) traditional role divisions between the sexes, (b) mandatory fidelity, and (c) compulsory optimism about the future of the relationship.

Rule Violations Leading to Conflict or Violence

The rule violations in relationships examined in this study were (a) violations which restricted or controlled the spouse's behaviour, (b) violations of rules which threatened situated identities, (c) violations of rules which disrupted claims of the other spouse, and (d) violations of

rules which are highly connected (Hotaling, 1980). Significant rule violations in these categories found in the couples were reported as follows.

Rule Violations Which Restricted or Controlled Behaviour. Two clear cut examples emerged. In the first, the husband was to be the provider; he refused to take jobs, or quit a job after a day or two. This caused the wife to go out and work, which she did not want to do. They had agreed he would work and she would stay home. Conflict and violence resulted from this disagreement. The second clear example involved the wife carrying out her duties as homemaker and finding her husband re-doing her work and setting higher standards for her, which she was not able to meet. Conflict and severe violence ensued.

Several examples of rules that controlled or restricted behaviour were given. Violation of these led to conflict and some violence in almost every incident reported. Restricting or controlling rules included (a) wife must stay with husband in the marriage under all circumstances, (b) wife cannot wear make-up, see friends or go out alone, (c) husband cannot come home (in the separated couple) without wife's permission, (d) husband decided when and if wife works outside of the home.

In a number of cases, mere threats to violate the above rules precipitated conflict and perhaps violence. The most common threat was by the wife "to leave", which elicited responses in the husband ranging from verbal abuse to taking her car keys and money to physical restraint and violence.

Rules Violation Which Threatened Situated Identities. The term situated identifies was used synonymously with "roles". The difference

was recognized by the author but the decision was made to use "roles" for clarity and to facilitate expression of examples.

The first example of a rule violation that threatens a situated identity was that of Mr. A. who saw himself as the "master of the house". He organized everything including his wife's lingerie. Mrs. A., in her role as the homemaker, moved certain cooking utensils back to their original place. Mr. A. became very angry, as did Mrs. A. Conflict and violence resulted. In this case, both identities seemed threatened: his or organizer, hers of homemaker.

All three wives identified themselves as exclusive primary care-givers to their young children. All three cited disagreements with their husbands when the husbands attempted to look after or interfered with the management of the babies. All three women described closeness with the children and appeared to be disturbed when husbands interfered.

Mr. B. believed his role as breadwinner and employee included authority over his time at work. Mrs. B. began to phone him at work, accused him of affairs and demanded he work fewer hours. He reported being upset and angry at her behaviour; violence ensued.

There were few other clear examples of rule violations threatening situated identities. This may have been the result of fairly firm and traditional expectations of the spouses in the relationship. Of, when a difficulty arose in this area, the perceived magnitude was so great that the violation spilled over into other areas such as restriction and control of behaviour or disruption of claims (authority) of the partner. This demonstrated connectedness of rules.

Rules Violations That Disrupted Claims of the Other Spouse. This rule violation was interpreted to mean claims to authority in the

relationship (Hotaling, 1980). One couple and one other spouse claimed no difficulties in this area. Two of the remaining spouses (couple A) reiterated the same or similar examples as in rule violations that threatened identities or restricted or controlled behaviour. The remaining spouse did not respond.

In the example elicited from Mrs. C., she said that her assumption was that each of them would be responsible for himself or herself. She said Mr. C. had been gradually seducing her into taking responsibility for him, "to control him". She was upset and angry about having to assume authority over Mr. C. and his decisions and plans, in addition to herself and children.

Within this group, rules about authority seemed very contentious in couple A, non-existent as an issue in couple B and abstract and unclear in couple C.

Violations of Rules That Are Highly Connected. This category was difficult to define. Essentially, the question asked elicited information on whether disagreements became complicated by the introduction of unrelated issues. While this phenomenon brought violent responses, it appeared that connectedness of rules and rule violations was more evident and comprehensive when examining the results all together.

For example, descriptions of rule violations that restricted and controlled subjects were very similar to descriptions of rule violations that threatened situated identities and, to some degree, rule violations that disrupted existing claims. Control seemed to result from authority or claim over something. Exertion of this authority was consistent with perceived role. Mr. A.'s need to control the house and the behaviour of these in it as part of his authority and role of "man of the house"

was an example.

The response to the question about disagreements becoming complicated by added issues was that all spouses but one said it was a problem that lead to severe violence. Couple B said they both brought the past into an argument and these arguments were long and bitter. Mrs. C. said she brought up the past "all the time", especially the incident of her broken jaw. She stated "its all still connected up in my head; I can't stop it." Mr. C. brought up their respective families when they argued, complicating the disagreements. Mrs. A. stated she introduced bigger issues and more global issues when they had disagreements. This did not usually lead to violence, but gave her the edge over Mr. A., a less verbal person.

Connected rules seemed to be connected for this population in three dimensions: history, similarity or relatedness to other rules or situations and intraindividually. They appeared to blur the focus in disagreements, provoking responses that were unclear.

Reaction of Spouses to Conflict

In a conflict situation, whether related to work violations or not, many of the reactions by the spouses were not consistent. The following reactions were reported.

Mrs. A. reported "turning cold" when her husband became angry with her. Mr. A. said he usually "was mad first." If Mrs. A. "raised her voice teased him" he got angrier. She retaliated with verbal abuse.

Mrs. B. said she now responded in a conflict by becoming quiet and suggesting they talk; in the past she would have raised her voice and escalated the conflict. Mr. B. said he too became calm now; in the past he started yelling and hitting, especially if she "used that tone of

voice." Now Mrs. C. said she became quiet and they talked it out.

Both couples B and C attributed the change in their response to each other in a conflict situation to the anger group at F.A.C.S. Mr. and Mrs. B. were attempting this before the group, and now talked things out daily. Both couples reported no major conflicts for at least two months prior to the interviews.

Couple A did not report a change in their reaction to each other. They stated their intent to begin "thinking and talking about things" before fighting. Their most recent reported major conflict was within the past week previous to the interviews.

Behaviour Identified by the Other Spouse as Leading to Violence

Five of the six spouses were able to identify behaviours in their partners that lead to anger. If the partner was violent, the spouse identified that too.

Each of the husbands identified the tone of his wife's voice as the main indicator she was angry. Two wives, Mrs. A. and Mrs. B. said they each knew their husband was angry by "the way he looked"; Mrs. C. offered no response.

Imminent violence was predicted by Mrs. A. when her husband "flexed his muscles and used vulgar words." Mrs. B. could tell there would be violence by the "look in his eyes" and he tensed as well. In both cases the wives reported it was too late to stop the violence by the time it was identified. The other spouses were unable to predict a violent reaction in the other, although they could identify anger.

Attributions Noted in Reactions Between Spouses

Attribution process involves the inference or perception of the

inclinations or tendencies of persons or things (Kelley and Thibaut, 1969). Attributions serve explanatory and predictive functions for behaviour (Forsyth, 1980). The attributions identified in the couples studied were as follows.

Couple A. Mrs. A. attributed blame for Mr. A.'s violence to herself, and believed he shared this attribution. She also attributed a need to organize and control to her husband. She attributed his violence to his family influence on him when he was a child. It appeared she attributed her reason for being, her cause, to (the rehabilitation of) her husband.

Mr. A. also attributed blame for his violence to himself and believed Mrs. A. shared this attribution to him. Mr. A. attributed Mrs. A.'s arguments with him to his "lowering her standards", i.e. his influence on her and also to her vengeance. "She wants to hurt me back." His own anger and violence were attributed at times to his having had a bad day.

Neither Mr. or Mrs. A. mentioned or implied attribution of aggressive intent to the other. Vengeance for past wrong doings was cited but this implied a retaliation of aggression rather than initiating aggression.

Couple B. Mrs. B. attributed to her husband a need to control her. She accepted her husband's attribution of blame when he told her she made him hit her. She attributed equal potential for violence to both of them. Mr. B. attributed their violence to their equal immaturity. He attributed his wife with power to control him "by her moods". He also attributed vengeance to Mrs. B.

This couple made no direct statements that indicated attribution of

aggression other than Mrs. B.'s vengeful attribute. Mr. B. did attribute so many fights between them to an expectation of fights, saying it was a "habit".

Couple C. The attribution of weakness was made by Mrs. C. to her husband and she believed he made the same attribution to her. Mrs. C. attributed the expectation to her husband that she would "mother" him. She attributed to her husband the following: lack of drive to improve, insecurity, immaturity. She believed that her husband attributed domination to her when she stood up to him. Mr. C. attributed the qualities of stubbornness, closedness and intelligence to his wife. He also attributed vengeance to Mrs. C., especially for her broken jaw.

Mr. and Mrs. C. did not mention information revealing attribution of aggression. Their other attributions were not directly related to violence, with the possible exception of the vengeance attributed to Mrs. C.

Summary

Attributions in the three couples were simple and descriptive of character traits more than intent to behave in a certain way. Vengeance emerged as a consistent attribution by husbands to wives; it was not mentioned by the wives. In couple A, each blamed himself or herself for the violence and believed the spouse shared this attribution.

The attribution of aggression as such was not identified from this data. The attribution of vengeance was however, considered related to or subsumed under the category of aggressive attributions. There were no other attributions related to aggression found.

Relationship Between Attribution of Aggression and the Occurence of Violence

The attribution of aggression was not identified in the data except in the form of vengeance attributed by all three husbands to their wives. The wives in this study have been reported as consistently less violent or not violent at all by both themselves and their husbands. If attribution of vengeance were considered attribution of violence, no clear relationship existed to the occurence of violence.

Relationship Between Specific Rule Violations and the Attribution of Aggression

No direct attributions of aggression were identified, therefore, there appeared to be no relationship to specific rule violations. The attribution of vengeance was not found in the context of rule violations.

A few attributions were found in the area of rule violations examined in this study. An attribution in the category of a rule violation that restricted or controlled was Mrs. B.'s attribution to her husband of a need to control her, her friends and where she went. Attribution of the need to control and organize the house to Mr. A. was within the areas of both rule violations that threatened situated identities and rule violations that disrupted claims, as he threatened Mrs. A.'s identity as a homemaker and also disrupted her claim on her possessions. Attributions regarding rule violations of connected rules were not identified.

Attribution of vengeance was made by all three husbands to their wives. No violence by the wives was reported in this study.

Other Findings Related to Attribution

Each couple was asked to comment on their relationship in terms of freedom, power, possessiveness, their ideals and expectations for change. The following findings that related to attribution were taken from that data.

Couple A described their relationship as "levelling out" and that they were "working hard". Mr. and Mrs. B. both felt their marriage was "satisfying" and "comfortable". In contrast, Mrs. C. said their relationship was "in limbo, but improving" and Mr. C. described it as "fair and progressing slowly". No other attributions were identified in any of the couples.

Greater freedom in the relationship was attributed to Mrs. A. by Mr. A., while she described it as equal. Mr. and Mrs. B. agreed on equality in their freedom. Mrs. C. attributed more freedom to her husband who believed freedom was shared equally between them.

Power in the relationship was described as equal by couples A and B, although Mr. A. differentiated his power as physical and Mrs. A.'s as mental. Mr. and Mrs. C. also called their power equal; Mrs. C. qualified this stating "she could have more." Attribution of equal power was expressed by all.

The area of possessiveness in the relationship elicited some attributions. Mr. A. attributed more possessiveness to his wife than to him. Mrs. A. attributed more possessiveness to him than herself, although she said, "It is pretty equal between us." Mr. and Mrs. B. agreed they were equally and not destructively possessive, but Mr. B. used to be very possessive of both Mrs. B. and his material possessions. Mrs. C. said Mr. C. would attribute more possessiveness to her; he gave

no response.

The ideals expressed by the couples about marriage were very ideal. Mrs. A. described dedication, sharing and caring; Mr. A. added the need to work on the relationship. Mrs. B. offered an "emotionally and physically fulfilling and challenging relationship" as the ideal. Mr. B. described a bonding. Mrs. C. mentioned closeness and sharing; Mr. C. agreed and added the need to think a lot in the relationship.

All of the couples stated they were "working toward or had achieved their ideals." Their unanimous expectations were to continue working toward their individual or joint goals. Each spouse appeared to attribute the same or nearly the same motivation to his or her spouse as he or she possessed to work towards the stated or implied goals.

Summary of Findings. There appeared to be an imbalance of attributions of freedom between spouses in two of the couples, with more freedom attributed to a spouse who believed freedom was equal between them. Attribution of power in the three couples, on the other hand, seemed equal. Two spouses attributed more possessiveness to the other. Attribution of motivation to the spouse to make changes in the relationship was the only other attribution area identified.

Although the attributions identified in this data were minimal, some significant findings were noted. The couples descriptions of their relationships, their ideals and expectations were fairly consistent and positive. All spouses spoke with strong optimism about the future of their relationships. All seemed to attribute high motivation to continue in the relationship to the other.

Summary

Relational rules and rule violations identified in this study were described. Spouse's reactions to conflict and predictions of violence were reported. The relationship of attributions and occurence of violence, attributions and rule violations and attributions in relation to other findings were presented.

Few attributions were identified from the data; of these only three attributions were related to rule violations. No relationship was found between attributions generally and attribution of aggression specifically and the occurence of violence. Attribution to all three wives of vengeance was found; no relationship to occurence of violence appeared to exist.

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION AND DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

Overview

The relevance of attribution theory in domestic violence was not clearly established by this study. However, the findings suggested the relevance of alternate models in explaining domestic violence. These are presented and discussed in this chapter. Observations on the findings of the study are made. Discussion of the results and questions for further research follow.

Relevance of Attribution Theory to Domestic Violence

Although few attributions were identified in the study, there appeared to this writer to be an active attribution process in the couples interviewed. The attribution of vengeance, or the desire to retaliate was noted in all three couples. Retaliation-counter-retaliation is the most likely tactic used in response to interpersonal violence according to Hotaling (1980). The process of retaliation-counterretaliation in families was found by Sprey (1971) to increase the probability of violence. A link between the attribution of vengeance and the attribution of aggression is suggested from the data, as retaliation implies an antecedent aggressive event.

Other attributions noted in the study were attributions to an external source (not the spouse) or to the spouse as a character trait. In some cases these attributions seemed to be precipitating factors in violent outbursts, although the causal relationship was unclear.

In summary, attribution theory would seem to have potential in explaining domestic violence although this was not established by this

study.

Alternatives to Attribution Theory in Domestic Violence Suggested by the Findings

The data collected suggested the following alternatives to attribution theory in explaining the occurrence of domestic violence.

Rule Violation Models. Relational rule violations were the medium by which attributions were sought in this study. Repeatedly subjects reported rule violations without reporting attributions. These rule violations appeared to play a part in domestic violence. This possibility has been discussed by Denzin (1970), Tedeschi et al (1974) and Hotaling (1980). The majority of the rule violations that reportedly led to violence in the subjects were those involving control issues. Rule violations in the area of disruption of claims, which are similar to control rules were consistently described as leading to conflict and in some cases, violence.

Communication Models. Communication in the relationship was identified by all the spouses as a problem area. Non-verbal communication figured largely in the descriptions of the precipitation of violence, such as "the tone of her voice" or "the look in his eyes". Pearce and Cronen (1980) described interpersonal rule systems as structurally deficient making communication problematic and disordering the social reality of the participants. In their theory of coordinated management of meaning communication is defined as a form of action by which persons collectively create and manage their social reality, within a mutual causal relationship. In violent couples one partner may feel powerless and express this through aggression. This generally

reinforces his social impotence. According to this communication model, this act would be accepted and become part of the system.

The nature of logic in communication was described by Harris (1980) as paradoxical. She suggested that couples' conflict is necessary to bring about conflict resolution, tension reduction and subsequent renewed commitment to the relationship. An example of paradox in logic is the firm control of one wife studied on her husband's drinking and drug use while wanting him to dominate her, to be the "boss".

Cognitive Dissonance Model. The observations made of the couples' unfailing optimism and positive attitudes about their situations led this writer to consider the phenomenon of cognitive dissonance as central to domestic violence. In 1957 Festinger described cognitive dissonance as two (or more) knowledges or beliefs, opinions or feelings held about one's self which are dissonant, or inconsistent with each other. This situation is psychologically uncomfortable and motivates the person to reduce the dissonance and achieve consonance (Shaw and Costanzo, 1970). An example is Mrs. A.'s professed ideas about how men should treat women and roles of husbands and wives juxtaposed to the fact that her husband was reluctant to take a job and he beat her severely. To maintain her equilibrium it would appear she somehow reduced the dissonance between these ideas and beliefs. Indeed, she expressed hope for the relationship and dedication to maintaining it.

Festinger (1957) tested the cognitive dissonance theory by examining forced compliance in the situation of prisoners of war who took on the values and attitudes of their captors. Cognitive dissonance

permitted the prisoners to both accept the situation and survive. This seemed to fit closely with the situations observed in the study. In couples A. and B. where severe and prolonged violence had occurred, the expressed attitudes and values of the spouses were similar, if not identical. In couple C. who had not had long duration of violence and who were separated, such agreement was not noted.

Retaliation-Counterretaliation and Blame. Although they are not formal models as described in this study, the observed phenomena of retaliation-counterretaliation and blame deserve comment.

The husbands all attributed vengeance, or the need to retaliate, to their wives. Hepburn (1973) suggested this was a possible tactic used by the perpetrator/attributor to reduce the harm done (to the relationship) by the violence, thus legitimating the violence in the attributor's view. Should a spouse retaliate with violence toward the aggressor, the original perpetrator would have an "excuse" to counteretaliate.

The process of retaliation-counterretaliation was interpreted by this writer as serving two purposes in the relationship. The violent spouse relieves himself of guilt by projecting blame for the incident onto the victim (Elbow, 1977). The wife, as perceived retaliator, holds the responsibility and control for starting and stopping the violence.

Related to the control of the violence is the self-blame expressed by the wives interviewed. Wortman (1976) suggested that while blaming one's self was painful, it gave the devastating aspects of a violent situation meaning. If a woman in a situation where she was a victim could somehow feel she was responsible for the occurrence of the violence,

she could then believe she had some degree of control over the situation. Madden and Janoff-Bulman (1981) reported that wives who blamed themselves for their husbands' violence perceived themselves as having more control in the relationship. Wives who blamed their husbands reported less marital satisfaction and less perceived control in their marriages.

Observations on the Findings of The Study

This study was designed to explore the relevance of attribution in domestic violence using a case study method in a small population. Although the study was exploratory, it was anticipated that attribution theory could be established as relevant to domestic violence by using the relational rules of Hotaling (1980) to elicit attributions. The results did not support this relevance.

Some of the limitations which may have influenced the results of this study and potential future studies in this area are listed.

(a) The size of the population was small, thereby inhibiting the collection of quantifiable or generalizable data.

(b) The subjects represented a select group of violent couples, as only a small percentage of this population present for or comply with treatment.

(c) Attribution theory is a difficult and abstract concept to describe and understand. The subjects may have had difficulty conceptualizing the situations and questions.

(d) Couples' conscious recollections of reactions in situations may not have corresponded to their actual behaviour at the time.

(e) The presence of a third party observer (the writer) in the

interviews probably interfered with the accuracy of the results.

Despite these limitations a number of areas within domestic violence have been identified which deserve further research. In addition, a large amount of data has been generated which may facilitate future studies in this area.

Discussion

The main purpose of this study was to examine the relevance of attributions in domestic violence. A secondary purpose was to gather a large amount of data to produce hypotheses for future, more elaborate studies.

The results of the study showed little support for the relevance of attribution theory to domestic violence in the group studied. In the opinion of this writer this does not mean that attributions do not exist in this group or that attributions do not have relevance in domestic violence. On the contrary, it seems that this area deserves further study, specifically in the areas of the attribution of vengeance and aggression. More refined methodology for eliciting attributions from this or a similar population should be employed.

The relevance of other models not examined in this study to domestic violence were revealed in the data. These include models of rules and rule violations in relationships, communication theory models, the model of dissonance and the phenomena of retaliation-counter-retaliation and self blame. Of these models, cognitive dissonance and communication theory models seemed to have significant relevance for future study of domestic violence based on the observations of this writer.

Because domestic violence is extremely complex and subject to the influence of so many forces, it seems logical to this writer that a number of theoretical models may be necessary to fully understand and explain the phenomenon. Future researchers might consider combining two or more of the models identified in this study to examine domestic violence.

Questions for Further Research

The outcome and process of this study have stimulated many questions about domestic violence, its cause, its course and ultimately, its cure. Some questions arising from this study are listed.

Questions Arising from the Literature

Do rule violations as suggested by Hotaling (1980) enhance the attribution of aggression?

Does attribution of aggression preciptate violence in marital relationships?

What particular relational rules exist in individual couples? Which, if any, rule violations lead to violence?

Does domestic violence result solely from pathology in the violent partner (when no other causes seem relevant)?

Questions Generated in the Course of the Study:

Do attributions influence the occurrence of domestic violence? If so, how?

Does attribution of vengeance to the other spouse perpetuate the violence? If so, how?

What is the relevance of cognitive dissonance in domestic violence?

Does cognitive dissonance perpetuate the violence? If so, how?

What role does blame play in domestic violence?

Is the occurrence of violence reduced by joint involvement of couples in treatment?

Is group treatment of perpetrators of domestic violence more effective when conducted concurrently with couples' therapy?

Questions that Occurred to the Writer as Possible Areas of Future Research:

How can attributions be effectively identified in relationships?

Are attributions valid only at the initial violent episode when the original attribution is made?

Do attributions of intent become character attributions or even part of the couple's defenses? How does this influence domestic violence?

Does cognitive dissonance promote violent couples remaining together?

Are the effects of treatment or counselling for violence enhanced when the couple is separated?

Questions to be Considered if This Study were to be Replicated or Imitated:

Would a longitudinal study of these or other couples reveal attributions more clearly?

Would an in-depth personal history of each spouse contribute significantly to the understanding of current relationship patterns? Specifically, how do each spouse's parents' patterns of relating correspond to those of the violent couple?

Would the use of a "normal" control group in the study of

domestic violence enhance the understanding of the problem?

To what degree does the presence of a third party observer influence the findings in the study of domestic violence?

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APPENDIX A

APPENDIX A

Interview Questionnaire For Individual Spouse

Introduction

The questions I am going to ask are to bring out information about areas of conflict in your relationship with your spouse and the way you react to the conflict.

There are four areas I will ask about. Each has to do with a certain way you get along with your husband/wife. In each I will ask you to describe to me two situations which are like your way of getting along with your spouse. One of the situations should be one in which conflict or violence might occur. The second situation should be one where the outcome is happy, or results in good feelings about your spouse.

Once the situations have been described, I will ask you some questions about your reactions and feelings in the situation. You will have the chance to talk about the questions as we go along.

By asking you to describe realistic situations and asking you about your feelings and reactions in the situations, I hope to understand better how certain actions are related to conflict or violence.

Note: The questions are read by interviewer. The questions to be asked by interviewer are the same for each situation.

Part One

In all relationships decisions are made about who does things and who goes places and under what circumstances. Often the actions of one person in a relationship will influence what the other person does.

Please think of two examples of situations in your relationship with your spouse in which the actions of one person influence the actions of the other.

Please try to think of a situation that could result in conflict or violence and one situation that could result in good feelings.

Part Two

We all identify ourselves in one or more roles: Husband, wife, friend, parent, child, lover, breadwinner, homemaker, etc.

Please think of two examples of a situation in your relationship with your spouse where something one person does changes the way the other person feelings about his role(s).

Please try to think of one situation that might result in conflict or violence and one situation which could end in good feelings.

Part Three

We all have areas we feel are "ours". These areas could be places, activities, power or areas of expertise.

Please think of two examples of situations in your relationship with your spouse in which something your spouse has done has changed the way you felt about your areas of authority.

Please give one example that might result in conflict or violence and one that might lead to good feelings.

Part Four

Ideas and feelings in our relationships are often connected to each other, sometimes for no apparent reason. In some situations extra issues get added to an existing discussion or dispute. Or, one action may have impact on a number of issues in a relationship.

Please think of two situations in your relationship with your spouse in which one issue or action has been influenced by additional issues or concerns that are not necessarily related to the original issue.

Please describe one situation that might result in conflict and one that might result in good feelings.

Questions For Each Situation:

1. Did you expect your spouse to act this way?
2. If so, why?
3. What was your response to his/her behaviour?
4. How do you think he/she would have wanted you to respond?
5. What do you think was his/her reason for acting this way?
6. What would he/she say was the reason for this behaviour?
7. Do you think he/she wanted to "get at you" by acting this way?
8. If so, for what reason?
9. How could you tell if your spouse understood your reaction to his/her behaviour?
10. What could have been changed in the situation to make it better.
11. What could you have done to change the situation yourself to make it better?
12. If you didn't try this, what prevented you?
13. What could your spouse have done to improve the situation?

Couple Interview Format

Introduction

I have asked you both to think of situations that would be typical of your relationship with each other. The situations were about four different areas, some dealing with conflict situations and some dealing with pleasant situations. Some of the questions may already have been answered. Please answer them anyway.

1. Were any of the areas or situations more bothersome or upsetting to you than others? Please talk about this.
2. Please describe a recent conflict you have had.
   a. How can you tell when the other one is getting angry?
   b. What do you do when you sense this is happening?
   c. How can you tell when there is going to be violence?
   d. What do you do when you sense this is happening?
   e. How much do you worry about what the other might do to you?
3. Who has more freedom in your relationship?
4. Who has more power in your relationship?
5. Who likes being husband or wife more?
6. Who is more possessive of his or her territory in the relationship?
7. Please describe your relationship now.
8. What do you think is going to happen with your relationship?
9. What would you like to have happen -- what can you do to make this change?
10. How will you know it has happened? What will tell you?
11. Describe marriage as a concept (as if to a person from another planet).

DATA SHEET

Name:

Age:

Education:

Occupation:

Sex:

Marital Status:

How long married:

Have you been married before?

If so, how many times:

Number of children from each marriage:

RESEARCH PARTICIPATION AGREEMENT

I have spoken with the interviewer. I agree to participate in a study designed to look at aspects of conflict in my relationship with my spouse. The project involves answering questions in an interview both by myself and with my spouse. The interview time will be approximately 3 hours (total).

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that my treatment or status in this agency will not be affected in any way, whether I choose to participate or not.

No information regarding my responses will be communicated to the staff. I also understand that certain data (age, sex, income, etc.) may be collected from me or my file. I understand that when the study is published my data will not be traceable to me. I understand that the researcher, Juhree Z. Clave, will take every reasonable precaution to ensure my confidentiality.

_____	_____
Witness	Subject
_____	_____
Date	Date

University of Alberta
Faculty of Education, Department of Educational Psychology

Forensic Assessment and Community Services
Edmonton

CONSENT FOR TAPING

Having agreed to participate in the study being conducted by Juhree Z. Clave, I hereby give my consent to the audiotaping of the interviews held with Ms. Clave.

I understand that the tapes of my interviews will be used solely for the purposes of this study and that the tapes will be destroyed when the project is finished. The tapes will not be available to anyone but the inerviewer and no identifying data from the tapes will be traceable to me in the research paper.

_____ _____

Witness Subject

_____ _____

Date Date

APPENDIX B

Spouse Abuse Prediction Checklist

Each item was rated with 1 point. An additional point was given if the balance of power was lopsidedly male dominant.

Characteristics Important for Both Wife-beating and Husband-beating

Husband employed part-time or unemployed.

Family income under $6,000.

Husband a manual worker.

Husband very worried about economic security.

Wife very dissatisfied with standard of living.

Two or more children.

Disagreement over children.

Grew up in family in which father hit mother.

Married less than ten years.

Age thirty or under.

Non-white racial group.

Above average score on Marital Conflict Index.

Very high score on Stress Index.

Wife dominant in family decisions.

Husband was verbally aggressive to wife.

Wife was verbally aggressive to husband.

Gets drunk but is not alcoholic.

Lived in neighborhood less than two years.

No participation in organized religion.

Characteristics That are Important for Wife-beating

Husband dominant in family decisions.

Wife is full-time housewife.

Wife very worried about economic security.

Characteristics That Are Important for Husband-beating

Wife was physically punished at age thirteen plus by father.

Wife grew up in family in which mother hit father.

Wife is a manual worker.

(Source: Straus, Gelles & Steinmetz, Behind Closed Doors, N.Y.: Anchor Press, 1981.)

Marital Conflict Index

Five specific questions were asked in the following manner:

I am going to read a list of things that couples do not always agree on. For each of them, please tell me how often you and your (husband/wife/partner) agreed during the past year. First, take managing the money. Did you and your (husband/wife/partner) always agree, almost always agree, usually agree, sometimes agree, or never agree about managing the money?

Questions	ALWAYS	ALMOST ALWAYS	USUALLY	SOME-TIMES	NEVER
a. Managing the money	1	2	3	4	5
b. Cooking, cleaning, or repairing the house	1	2	3	4	5
c. Social activities and entertaining	1	2	3	4	5
d. Affection and sex relations	1	2	3	4	5
IF RESPONDENT HAS CHILDREN AT HOME OR NOT AT HOME, ASK:					
e. Things about the children	1	2	3	4	5

(Source: Straus, Gelles & Steinmetz, Behind Closed Doors, N.Y.: Anchor Press, 1981.)

Stress Index

One point was given for each event occuring at the present time.

Life Event

1. Troubles with the boss.
2. Troubles with other people at work.
3. Got laid off or fired from work.
4. Got arrested or convicted of something serious.
5. Death of someone close.
6. Foreclosure or a mortgage or loan.
7. Being pregnant or having a child born.
8. Serious sickness or injury.
9. Serious problem with health or behavior of a family member.
10. Sexual difficulties.
11. In-law troubles.
12. A lot worse off financially.
13. Separated or divorced.
14. Bit increase in arguments with spouse/partner.
15. Big increase in hours worked or job responsibilities.
16. Moved to different neighborhood or town.
17. Child kicked out of school or suspended.
18. Child got caught doing something illegal.

(Source: Straus, Gelles & Steinmetz, Behind Closed Doors, N.Y.: Anchor Press, 1981.)

APPENDIX C

APPENDIX C

F.A.C.S.

(FORENSIC ASSESSMENT AND COMMUNITY SERVICES)

PROGRAM GUIDE

F.A.C.S. is the community component of the Forensic Service, Alberta Hospital, Edmonton, and is located at:

#306 Boardwalk
10310 - 102 Avenue
Edmonton, Alberta
T5J 2X6

Phone: 427-8194

F.A.C.S. provides a wide range of mental health services to the forensic population in Northern Alberta. Services include:

1. Assessment
2. Treatment and Follow-Up
3. Community Education, Liason and Consultation

Approximately 1000 new referrals are received annually. The majority of referrals are made by the criminal justice system in Edmonton. One third of the referrals come from rural locations, correctional institutions, or from Alberta Hospital, Edmonton.

Referral forms may be obtained from F.A.C.S. Urgent or complex cases may be referred initially by telephone.

ASSESSMENT SERVICES

Assessments are provided primarily at the request of officers of the Court. The majority are carried out prior to sentencing or during the probationary period. Special assessments may be carried out pre-trial or during incarceration to determine fitness to stand trial or suitability for treatment referral. Assessments may include: psychiatric evaluations; psychological testing of intellectual and personality functioning; social and developmental histories; and specialized assessments regarding specific problems involving areas such as sexual preference, vocational apptitude, or brain dysfunction. Individual reports are sent to the referring agent and recommendations concerning case management, rehabilitation, and therapeutic planning are provided.

TREATMENT AND FOLLOW-UP

Treatment programs are provided at F.A.C.S. for individuals who are willing to participate and for whom suitable treatment does not exist elsewhere. Priority is given to violent and sexual offenders and to those who are chronically mentally ill or socially handicapped.

Treatment Philosophy. The treatment programs at F.A.C.S. are based on the premise that many criminal offenders behave inappropriately because of various personal problems and deficits. Nevertheless, the violation of the person or rights of others is an irresponsible choice. The confrontation with the criminal justice system provides an effective means of motivating the offender to participate in treatment which helps the offender to function more effectively in socially acceptable ways.

Treatment is based on group therapy in order to utilize the powerful dynamics of peer interaction and to conserve staff resources. In addition, extensive individual therapy is provided. This may involve family members when they represent an integral part of the problem. Behavioral therapy, educational and supportive methods are employed in conjunction with medication as required.

Treatment for Violent Offenders. The medication and follow-up clinic was originally designed for out-patients on the Lieutenant Governor's Warrant. The clinic is conducted by psychiatric, nursing and social work staff from F.A.C.S. and Alberta Hospital, Edmonton. The program now serves ex-patients from the Forensic Unit at Alberta Hospital, Edmonton, probationers, parolees, and clients on bail bonds who are instructed to attend F.A.C.S. prior to trial.

A comprehensive program directed at domestic violence is currently being developed. See separate description of violent offender groups.

The womens' group is designed for female offenders whose involvement in an abusive relationship may have contributed to a variety of minor offences. The purpose of the group is to develop self-confidence, assertiveness and effective coping mechanisms.

Treatment for Sex Offenders. The aggressive sex offenders group is directed toward those sex offenders whose deviant behavior involves overt use of violence or coercion. Rape, sexual assault and pedophilia are dealt with in this program.

Two groups are conducted for non-aggressive sex offenders, i.e. those involved in exhibitionism, voyeurism, obscene telephone calls or frottage.

A new group has been initiated for juvenile sex offenders. Youths between twelve and eighteen years of age who are living in the community will receive treatment with special attention to their family relationships and involvement by Child Welfare and the juvenile court system.

Incest Offenders are treated in a group which constitutes a component of a comprehensive joint treatment program in conjunction with the Sexual Assault Centre and the Runaway Project. A family dyad group is conducted jointly by F.A.C.S. and the Child Sexual Abuse Treatment Program. At this stage, spouses, victims and their siblings are involved in resolving relationship issues with the offender.

Behavioral/Educative Programs. The Assertiveness Training Group is designed for offenders whose passivity and inadequacy contribute to participation in criminal activities. Skills in appropriate assertiveness are taught and are differentiated from non-assertive or aggressive behaviors.

The Skill Development Group is directed toward offenders who have difficulty in functioning adequately and independently in society. Social and coping skills are taught through instruction, practise, supportive group interaction and behavioral monitoring.

Human Sexuality Courses are provided periodically for individuals whose lack of knowledge about sexual and relationship issues may contribute to ineffective social functioning.

Follow-up is also provided at F.A.C.S. by staff of the therapeutic community program on the 5B Unit at the Alberta Hospital, Edmonton, for patients discharged from that program.

COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

F.A.C.S. provides a valuable service related to other agencies, services and the public by sharing expertise regarding the forensic population. Staff are frequently invited to provide inservice education or to present at conferences, seminars and workshops related to forensic mental health. A variety of activities have been undertaken through personal presentations, written materials and the media to inform the public of problems and resources in this area. In addition, F.A.C.S. participates in specialized programs in conjunction with other agencies. F.A.C.S. continues to promote effective coordination between the criminal justice, social services and mental health delivery systems.

Prepared by

A. Riediger, Ph.D
Supervisor of Therapy Programs

APPENDIX C

F.A.C.S.

(FORENSIC ASSESSMENT AND COMMUNITY SERVICES)

VIOLENT OFFENDER GROUPS

There are three groups offered at Forensic Assessment and Community Services for violent offenders and their victims. Membership in these groups is drawn from clients who have been violent in the past and who may have been charged and referred through the judicial system and their spouses/victims. All group members are screened through social psychological methods and referred for further medical, psychological and neurological assessment as appropriate. The focus of all three groups is on increasing the individual's capacity to short circuit typical patterns of behavior that lead to violence. This is achieved through a combination of traditional therapy methods used in groups and contemporary methods based on neurolinguistics programming and systems theory. An evaluative component is being implemented.

The three groups are:

Violent Offenders Group. Persons who have committed violent acts may participate in this group. Verbal therapy centres on helping the members learn thought patterns that inhibit violent impulses.

Couples Group. This group is for the violent offenders and their spouses/victims. Similar methods are employed to help both partners understand and change patterns of relating to overcome violence in the relationship and improve conflict resolution skills.

Violent Offenders' Victims Group. Spouses/victims of violent offenders attend this group. Therapy is based on the above

mentioned modalities and is aimed at providing support to the members as well as teaching ways of coping with the problem of domestic violence.

Prepared by

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